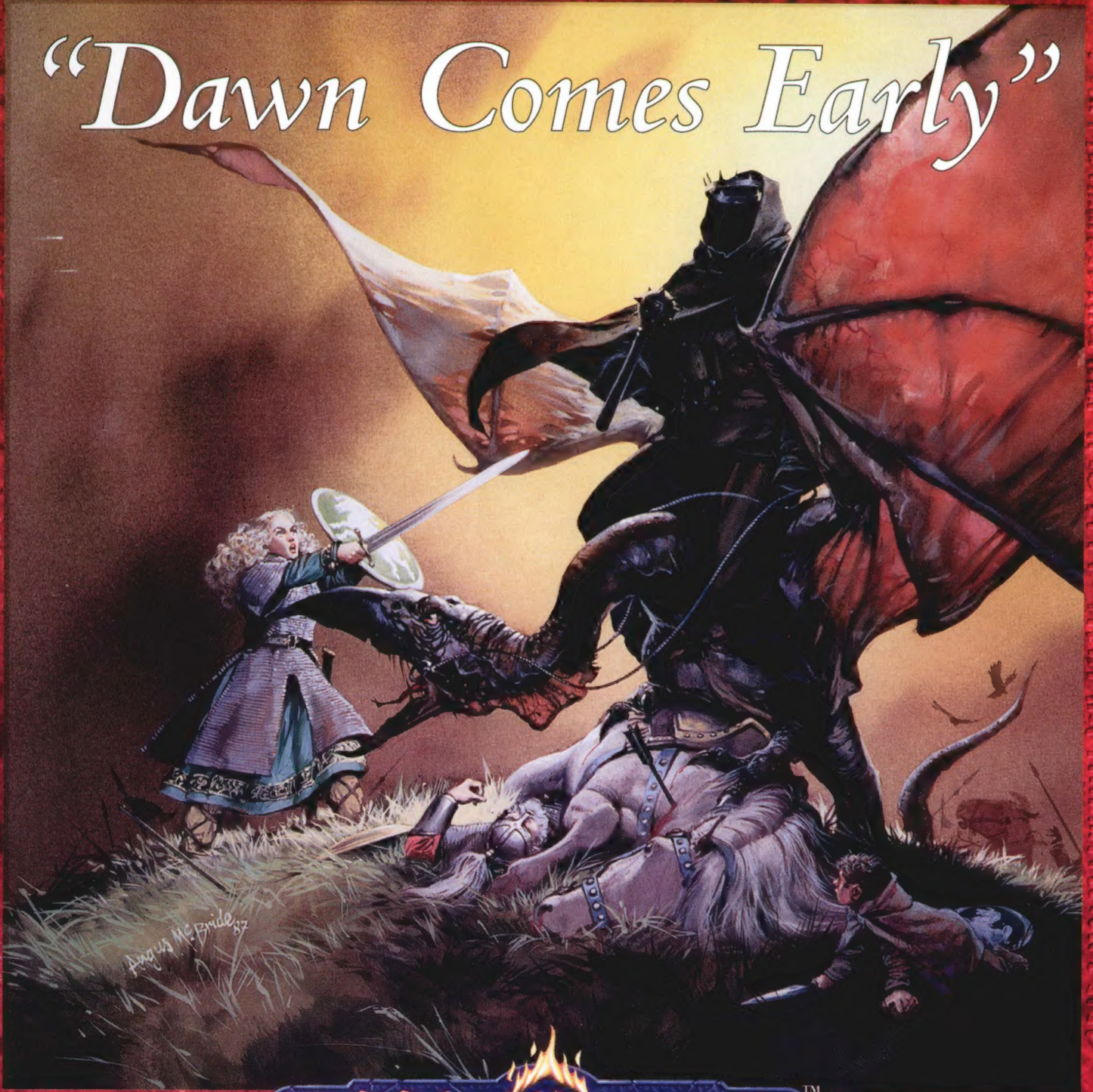


LORD ^{of} the RINGS™

ADVENTURE GAME

"Dawn Comes Early"



middle  earth™



D

on't talk to yerself!" said Tom. "But if you wants to sit on the last one, sit on him. Which is he?"

"The one with the yellow stockings," said Bert.

"Nonsense, the one with the grey stockings," said a voice like William's.

"I made sure it was yellow," said Bert.

"Yellow it was," said William.

"Then what did yer say it was grey for?" said Bert.

"I never did. Tom said it."

"That I never did!" said Tom. "It was you."

"Two to one, so shut yer mouth!" said Bert.

"Who are you a-talkin' to?" said William.

"Now stop it!" said Tom and Bert together. "The night's gettin' on, and dawn comes early. Let's get on with it!"

"Dawn take you all, and be stone to you!" said a voice that sounded like William's. But it wasn't. For just at that moment the light came over the hill, and there was a mighty twitter in the branches. William never spoke for he stood turned to stone as he stooped; and Bert and Tom were stuck like rocks as they looked at him. And there they stand to this day, all alone, unless the birds perch on them; for Trolls, as you probably know, must be underground before dawn, or they go back to the stuff of the mountains they are made of, and never move again.

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, page 41 *

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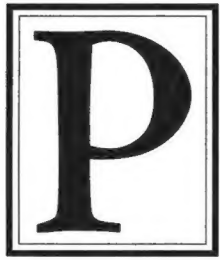
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LORD of the RINGSTM

ADVENTURE GAME

“DAWN COMES EARLY”

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ssst! Tolman, are you in there?" whispered Gláin. A frown crossed the Dwarf's face as the silence stretched. He glanced over his shoulder. The town square was deserted, save for his companions, but burgling a lockhouse was not exactly a relaxing activity.

"Do you think he might have fallen asleep?" murmured the Half-elf at Gláin's side. "He is a Hobbit, and that kindred were always fond of their supper, their pipeweed, and naptime."

"I'll singe his toe hairs with a hot poker if he's dreaming right now! Let's check the window of the other cell."

Long shadows, cast by the full moon, dogged their heels as the pair moved around the corner of the building. The Dwarf's rust-colored tunic looked almost black in the lunar light, but Rilwen (the Half-elf) was less well camouflaged. The hood of her cloak kept slipping down to reveal the shining strands of her flaxen hair.

♦ ONE ♦ INTRODUCTION

So, you're sitting around a table, perhaps with your family and a few friends. You've ordered a pizza (or maybe take-out Chinese), poured some soda (or maybe some seltzer), and opened up this adventure game. Like us, you thought *The Hobbit*® was a great read, and *The Lord of the Rings*™ unsurpassable. And now you're hoping to find more of Tolkien's magic in a game. Read on!

Lord of the Rings Adventure Game™ (*LOR*) introduces you to fantasy role playing (FRP) in Middle-earth. We believe Middle-earth provides an ideal setting for a fantasy role playing game. It's a reflection of our world, as well as a construction of mythology by a great and learned man.

You probably could tell us that Middle-earth is itself undying. The great epic lives on in the minds and hearts of all who've read it. Perhaps you've even imagined your own adventures, daydreaming of great deeds performed and impossible quests accomplished — following in the footsteps of Frodo and Sam.

It's only natural, then, to use this incredible foundation in a fantasy role playing context. Playing *LOR* (*Lord of the Rings Adventure Game*), you will experience Middle-earth in a new way — more immediate than books and more challenging than daydreams. As a mighty Elf Warrior or a deft Hobbit Scout, you will discover forgotten forests, powerful artifacts, and ancient lore from the distant Years of the Two Trees — all hints of the eternal mysteries — in the land of Dragons and Elves.

WHAT IS FANTASY ROLE PLAYING?

Waiting for that mushroom, extra cheese pizza (or the stir-fried rice and wonton soup), your stomach growls. You sip your soda. "What *is* fantasy role playing, anyway?"

Take another sip of that soda, and start reading aloud (if you're not already). Then your friends can find out all about it at the same time you do. And you won't have to go back and re-read!

You've probably already done some role playing, but you called it *Cops and Robbers*, *Army*, *Cowboys and Indians*, or *House*. In these games of make-believe, you took on the roles of other people — generals and spies and soldiers, or Mom and Dad, or Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane and Chief Sitting Bull. Acting and speaking as they would, you played out a story. You were role playing.

Role playing is the key element of *LOR*, but a fantasy role playing game differs from make-believe in some important ways. Rather than running around your backyard or your neighborhood, you'll be sitting comfortably at someone's dining room table and talking. And a referee will preside over the game much as a chairperson would preside over a meeting.

In this way, an FRP (fantasy role playing) game is a lot like a story or a play. In a story, the author chooses a setting and the actions of all the characters. J.R.R. Tolkien created Middle-earth and made it the setting for *The Lord of the Rings*. He chose the decisions and actions made by Frodo, Gandalf, Saruman, Sauron, and all the other characters, and thus created the plot of the story.

In an FRP game, the referee (called the *Gamemaster* or *GM*) chooses the setting. He or she also chooses the decisions and actions made by some, but not all, of the characters. These choices are the basis of the adventure that will follow. In *LOR*, Middle-earth is the chosen setting. And many of the characters from Tolkien's stories appear throughout the game.

One of you, now lounging in your chairs, will be the GM (Gamemaster) as soon as you start playing. The rest of you will be players. Both roles are a lot of fun!

During a game, each player chooses the actions of his or her own *player character* (or *PC*). For example, you might play an Elven Bard named Gallind who is on a quest to find the magical crown stolen from his family. You would take the role of Gallind the way Mark Hamill takes the role of *Luke Skywalker* in the movie *Star Wars* or the way a great Shakespearean actor takes the role of *MacBeth*, the tragic Scottish king, in the play.

You decide when Gallind speaks, and you say what he says. You decide when Gallind casts a spell, and you tell the GM which spell he casts. The rules (more about them later) will determine whether the spell works or not.



The Gamemaster chooses the actions of the other characters (called *non-player characters* or *NPCs*). For example, the GM will role play Gandalf when the Wizard meets the player characters (PCs) on the road. He or she will speak the words that Gandalf says to the PCs and will decide whether the Wizard lingers to give advice or rushes off on important business elsewhere!

Each player takes the role of his or her character, and the Gamemaster role plays the non-player characters. A fantasy role playing game is the living story that results from interaction between the characters to create an exciting, ever-changing adventure.

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

The rest of SECTION ONE explains the few basic concepts you'll need to know before you start playing.

SECTIONS TWO & THREE will get you started, while SECTIONS FOUR through SEVEN continue the fun with a tangle with . . . well, you'll find out what your characters tangle with when you get there!

The Guidelines (the other booklet in the **LOR** box) contains all the rules (or guidelines), compiled in one place for easy reference. We like the term *guidelines*, because they're not a lot of boring *don't's* — but a concise set of *do's* for exciting role playing.

MANEUVERS

While role playing, characters will attempt to perform certain actions. We call them *activities* and *maneuvers*. You can label them whatever you like. In the following excerpt, written by J.R.R. Tolkien, Bilbo the Hobbit is attempting a *Subterfuge maneuver*.

" . . . Of the various buglarious proceedings he had heard of, picking the Troll's pockets seemed the least difficult, so at last he crept behind a tree just behind William.

"Bert and Tom went off to the barrel. William was having another drink. Then Bilbo plucked up courage and put his little hand in William's enormous pocket. There was a purse in it, as big as a bag to Bilbo. "Ha!" thought he warming to his new work as he lifted it carefully out, "this is a beginning!"

"It was! Trolls' purses are the mischief, and this was no exception. "Ere, 'oo are you?" it squeaked, as it left the pocket; and William turned round at once and grabbed Bilbo by the neck, before he could duck behind the tree."

— *The Hobbit*, p. 36

Maneuvers have a chance of success that depends on a character's *bonuses*. (More about *bonuses* later! See *The Guidelines* on pages 4-5 for details.) And Bilbo certainly failed his *Subterfuge maneuver* when he attempted to filch William's purse from the Troll's pocket.

In **LOR**, you might play Tolman, a Hobbit Scout, trying to filch a Troll-treasure from a locked chest. Picking the lock on the chest is a *maneuver*. Hopefully, you'll do better than Bilbo! Good luck when the time comes!

ACTIVITIES

Activities are actions that may normally be automatically accomplished, given the right circumstances and enough time. In the next excerpt, also from Tolkien, Frodo is *packing* and *worrying*. He has both the time and tools necessary for these activities, and thus succeeds with both!

"Autumn was well under way before Frodo began to worry about Gandalf again. September was passing and there was still no news of him. The Birthday, and the removal, drew nearer, and still he did not come, or send word. Bag End began to be busy. Some of Frodo's friends came to stay and help him with the packing: there was Fredegar Bolger and Folco Boffin, and of course his special friends Pippin Took and Merry Brandybuck. Between them they turned the whole place upside-down."

— *The Fellowship of the Ring*, p. 102

In **LOR**, you might play a Dwarven Warrior named Gláin who likes to sharpen his battle-axe before leaving town. Unless Gláin loses his whetstone, sharpening his weapon is an *activity* and is automatically accomplished. There is no chance of failure.

Activities and *maneuvers* can be combined to form *action sequences*. Some *sequences* are unique and occur perhaps only once in any role playing game. Many more are quite common. Sneaking through a town and combatting an enemy are common *sequences*.

HIGHLIGHTED AND BOXED TEXT

Throughout this adventure game, you'll find five different types of text, corresponding to the different components of role playing.

Narrative descriptions and instructions (I) to the GM appear as normal text paragraphs, just like this one. Most of the paragraphs you've read thus far have been in this first category. *Action sequences* which are composed only of *activities* (no *maneuvers*) also appear as normal paragraphs.

EXAMPLE

Examples (2) are set off in boxes like this one. They are included to make instructions to the GM a bit clearer. The title **EXAMPLE** appears at the top of the box to let you know it's an example.



GM NOTE

GM notes (3) also appear within boxes. Some provide tips on how to handle a challenging role playing situation adroitly. Others discuss the reasons (which may not be immediately clear) behind certain instructions to the GM. The title GMNOTE appears at the top of the box to let you know that it's a GM note.

Statements to be read aloud to the players (4) are highlighted, just like this paragraph. These statements usually describe the scene surrounding the player characters (PCs), narrate the actions taken by a non-player character (NPC), or are the words spoken by an NPC.

Action sequences (5) guide the GM and the players (and thus the PCs and the NPCs) through game actions such as sneaking across a rough moorland, combat with an enemy, or climbing a fortress wall. Most *action sequences* have *maneuvers* in them and appear in the form below.

I

Action sequences are composed of several paragraphs. Each paragraph or each group of paragraphs will have a number as a title. This paragraph of an example *action sequence* has the number 1 as its title. Usually, the last sentence in a numbered paragraph will tell the GM to read *stage 2* (or 3, or 4, etc.) of the *action sequence* next. You should read *stage 2* of this example *action sequence* now.

2

And here you are, reading *stage 2*! It's really quite simple. *Action sequences* may include anywhere from two or three numbered sections to twenty or more. But each section (called a *stage*) will always tell you which number you should go to next, so it's as easy as reading a story. *Action sequences* may include any or all of the four other categories of text (instructions, examples, GM notes, and statements to be read aloud).

ROLLING THE DICE

LOR has a pair of dice included among its components. Many times during your adventures you will *roll the dice* to obtain a number between 2 and 12. The resulting *dice roll* is often referred to in the text as "2D6" (an abbreviation for rolling 2 Dice, 6-sided).



ho are you going to choose?” Jennifer brushed her heavy, blond bangs away from her eyes. “I think I’m going to play the Half-elf, Rilwen.”

“Oooooe! Jenny’s going to have pointy ears,” laughed Stuart, her brother, kicking his friend Michael under the table.

Michael smiled. “I doubt it. Tolkien’s Elves don’t have pointy ears, and I think I’m going to play one, too. Or maybe a Dwarf. Gallind and Gláin both intrigue me.” He winked at Jennifer and shoveled a huge wonton from his soup into his mouth.

Stuart picked up a piece of paper and began to read, not at all abashed by his friend’s snub. “Listen to this! Tolman the Hobbit has a magical dagger, and he’s a Finder. He locates missing people and lost things. I’m picking him. He’s a Scout, so I’ll be able to sneak around and jump out from corners to scare Jenny.” Stuart paused, glancing at his sister from the corner of his eye. She didn’t seem to be the least bit annoyed by his teasing. “Only kidding,” he added, just in case.

• TWO • STARTING PLAY

In fantasy role playing games, unlike board games, you don’t need to read all the rules before you start to play or have fun. Learning how to role play can be done by experimentation. There is no right or wrong way. As long as you are enjoying yourselves, and everyone is participating, you’re right on track. Think of this book as a friend sitting at your elbow who will prompt you when you “forget your lines,” explain things when you get confused, and provide more information when you’re ready for it.

Of course, if you really want to read all the guidelines before you start playing, you can peruse the booklet entitled *The Guidelines* where they are compiled for easy reference. But don’t feel that you must do so in order to begin. You can begin playing and learning while reading the next few paragraphs.

For the smoothest playing experience, we do recommend that at least one person in your group (preferably the Gamemaster) read the guidelines before playing. However, if the “bumps” and momentary misunderstandings that accompany trying something new are all part of the fun for you, feel free to dive in. The next few pages will get you started with no delay.

CHOOSING A GAMEMASTER

The first thing to do is choose who will be the referee or GM (Gamemaster) in your group. The GM will be role playing lots of characters, rather than focusing on the thoughts and actions of one character. He or she will also have the final say on the result of any character’s *activity* or *maneuver*. These broad responsibilities mean that the GM, more than any one player, sets the tone of the game.

If you're a parent of young children, probably you should take on that role, rather than one of your youngsters. Otherwise, you will want to pick someone whom everyone trusts to be fair and who has some flair for drama or storytelling.

Perhaps you all agree on who would be great in the managing role of the GM. That makes choosing very easy. But if the choice is not obvious, take a vote or draw names out of a hat.

Over time, each person in your group may take a turn being the GM. Each will bring different strengths to the role, providing enjoyable variations in play for all.

CHOOSING CHARACTERS

When you've picked a GM, the rest of the group, the players, will choose characters. This adventure game provides six pre-generated characters. The game will flow most easily if you have five or six players (as well as one GM, of course).

Persuade Mom to take her nose out of the newspaper, if necessary. Or phone your best buddy and tell him or her that role playing is a lot more fun than the latest episode of *Star Trek*. You can still play with fewer than five players, but the GM may need to be a little more inventive than usual to keep the ball rolling! This can be quite a challenge if you've never Gamemastered before!

What does the *pre-generated* mean in the term *pre-generated characters*? It means that the mental and physical capabilities of each character have been provided. The characters are ready to play.

Strength, intelligence, and agility are a few examples of the provided capabilities (called *statistics* or *stats*). They will allow the results of actions taken by a character in the game to be determined.

Think about it for a moment. Jennifer, Michael, and Stuart won't be leaping any bottomless chasms in your dining room! They'll be sitting comfortably in their chairs doing a lot of talking. So, how do you decide whether Rilwen, Gláin, and Tolman (their characters) reach the other side of this bottomless chasm or fall for all eternity? You look at their *stats*!

To learn more about stats and game actions immediately, you may turn to pages 6-7 in the booklet of guidelines. However, you don't need to understand all this in detail right now. You will pick it up easily and naturally once you have arrived at a later phase in the game.

The pre-generated characters also have personal histories developed for each of them. The attitudes, feelings, and loyalties that grow from past experiences will help the players to role play their characters. Tolman the Hobbit (one of the 6) is more than a playing piece on a board. In the world of imagination and story, he becomes a living, breathing personality with unique and original responses to events and people around him.

Here is a list of the pre-generated player characters available:

Tolman GreenthumbHobbit Scout
Lily GreenthumbHobbit Scout
GallindElf Bard
TatharínaHuman Bard
GláinDwarf Warrior
RilwenHalf-elf Ranger

The personal history of each character, along with his or her Character Record and an illustration, is printed on a fold-out sheet of heavy stock. These fold-outs are collected into a booklet (along with some maps and floorplans). You should remove the staples securing the booklet and separate the character sheets. That way each player will have all the info for his or her character right at hand during play.

The players may wish to read the personal history of each character before deciding on the ones they will play. However, there are a few secrets contained in each of these accounts which can provide considerable enjoyment if discovered by their friends later in the game. We recommend that both you and the players read the short character summaries in **SECTION THREE**. That should provide everyone with enough information to make a good choice.

If you have six players, each player will role play one of the characters. If you have only five players, the GM should role play the remaining character as a non-player character (NPC).



LET'S START!

Perhaps you are now saying, "This preliminary stuff is interesting, but when do we start?" The answer is: "You *have* started!" Choosing characters is part of the fun of fantasy role playing. Let the players take their time settling on a character.

While the players are choosing characters and reading their histories, the GM should read **THE TALE** (on this page) and **FOR YOUR EYES ONLY!** (page 12). Only the GM should read these sections, since they contain information that the player characters **should not know**.

After you, the GM, have read this material — it will help you stay one step ahead of your players — you may wish to skim the histories of the PCs (player characters). Perhaps you can look over your players' shoulders while they read. At the very least, you should re-read the character summaries (**SECTION THREE**) for a good grasp of their personalities.

THE TALE

Wûlafûrad, a Stone Troll who was often hungry and always a bully, blinked, yawned, and stretched his arms. He'd been asleep for a very long time, and his joints creaked. Maybe a nice, fat ewe would wander by his Troll-hole just in time for a midnight snack. More probably, he would have to hunt for his meal. Wûlafûrad (or Wilfred) rubbed his eyes and kicked his brother, still slumbering beneath a ragged quilt.

"Lârunag! Move yer blimey arse out o' the bed!" Wilfred delivered another kick. "If it's grub yer wanting, you'd better be up before the moon sets."

The quilt heaved and slid to the floor, revealing the grizzly tufts of hair that cling to the scaly scalps of most Stone Trolls. Lârunag (or Lawrence) belched and grumbled, "Get yer own midnight snack. I'm not snabbling no ewe just to see yer gobble all but the bones afore I swallow a mouthful!"

The brothers continued quarreling while Wilfred donned a huge (Troll-sized) leather jerkin, a battered felt hat, and enormous boots. Lawrence swung his feet over the side of his bed and started picking his teeth with a splinter of bone. His eyes stared vacantly at his brother's ankles, while his thoughts roamed backward in time. Only when Wilfred hefted a massive wooden mallet and moved toward the door did Lawrence stand up.

"Where'd the blighter go?" he asked.

Wilfred frowned. "What blighter? Yer a loon, Lawrence! There's nobody in this here hole but me and you."

"The booby with the fiddle," insisted Lawrence. "He played and played, and you fell asleep! Fell right over on yer ear, Wilfred. Never seen yer look so silly in all the time what I've known yer."

Wilfred thumped his mallet against the floor in disgust. "Yer a dreamer, Lawrie! Once it was Elves dancing in the glen, now it's a fiddler lulling Trolls to sleep. Give over. And come help me find some tucker!"

The pair never did get the sequence of events straight, but a young man and his viol had indeed charmed the two Troll brothers to sleep over one hundred years ago. Fiorin, a travelling minstrel appealed to by the Hobbits and Men of Bree, intervened to save the sheep and goats that were feeding the Trolls' voracious appetites. His tunes were effective, but only a temporary solution. One century later, Wilfred and Lawrence have awakened to trouble the town of Bree again.

The Bree-landers have long since forgotten Fiorin and his viol, as well as the Trolls that were his foes. Polo Hammidge, a Hobbit possessing large flocks and extensive farmlands, was the first to suffer a loss. He reported the theft of one fine ewe and her two lambs to the Shirriff and hoped that such would be the sum of his misfortunes for the season. The disappearance of another lamb within two days buried his optimism. Polo ordered his sons to pasture the sheep closer to home.

The following week, Odo Underbarrow also lost three sheep before moving his livestock to the fields surrounding his barns. Since he is less wealthy than his neighbor, Polo, Odo worries that even these limited losses may require him to sell some of his land to make ends meet. He is sure that poachers are not behind the missing ewes, since he saw a bestial shadow fleeing for the woods while he stood guard over the flock. Odo suspects wolves or a wildcat are feasting on mutton somewhere in the Chetwood to the north.

Odo and Polo are not the only Bree-landers taking notice of the sheep disappearances. Nat Groathusk and his buddy Gil Mossgrave share a shack at the edge of town. No one really knows how the two make a living, but they are not well liked by either the Mayor or the Shirriffs. Nat is a skinny, sandy-haired man who always has a sneer in his narrow, green eyes. Gil is quieter, more unobtrusive, but the set muscles around his mouth and the strange flatness in his brown-eyed gaze scare the few that really notice him. He is less wiry than Nat, and twists his long, black hair in a braid (highly unusual for Bree).

Shortly after the first ewe was missed from Polo Hammidge's flock, Gil left Bree for several days. The townsfolk didn't know (or care) where he had gone, but they enjoyed being free of his black-browed presence. Had they seen Inledair the Bandit-king who greeted Gil at his journey's end, the Bree-landers might have felt more concerned. As it was, they merely grumbled privately when Gil returned.

He returned with information and instructions for himself and Nat. The Trolls were to be encouraged to raid the sheep flocks. The Bree-landers were to be hindered in their efforts to stop the unknown (to them) menace. Nat lengthened the hours during which he lingered at *The Prancing Pony* to soak up local gossip. His news that the farmers were moving their sheep closer to town sent Gil on yet another mysterious errand, this time to the Chetwood. His actions there caused Wilfred and Lawrence to move from their Troll-hole in the forest to a sturdy stone bridge with the shadows so thick under its arch that the sun never dispelled them even when low on the horizon. The bridge was closer to town than their hole, and the Trolls feasted well on the first night after their change in headquarters.

The next evening Nat told Gil about Tolman Greenthumb's promise to find the missing sheep. "Once that pipsqueak Hobbit Finder gets on the problem, you know it'll be solved in a hare's wink, Gil Mossgrave," he concluded sullenly.

"Not if we do our part properly," insisted Gil. "I have a plan, and if it works the little ratter will stay behind bars for a few days, at least."

The two rogues conferred before approaching Milt Hoary, Chas Bitterwilt, Boffo Hollohall, and Gorum Flinthill. These Men and Hobbits (all rather dour, dissatisfied, and crotchety) were not hard to convince that odd, happy-go-lucky Tolman was himself behind the sheep disappearances. They waited in a body on Holfast Bunce, the senior Shirriff, demanding Greenthumb's arrest for poaching.

Milt remembered seeing Tolman skulking (in his words) around Polo Hammidge's barns, while Boffo claimed to have glimpsed the Hobbit returning from the pastures with a lamb on his shoulders. Shirriff Holfast, although sincerely fond of his nephew Tolman and certain he was not guilty, nevertheless could not refuse to act in the face of such evidence. With Nat at his side (the scoundrel wasn't sure that the Shirriff would perform the arrest if he wasn't nudged), Holfast took Tolman to the lockhouse when the Hobbit returned from his first investigation concerning the missing sheep.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY!

What's supposed to happen in the adventure called "DAWN COMES EARLY"? The players shouldn't know, but the GM will have more fun if he or she does. Read the outline below to be a GM in the know!

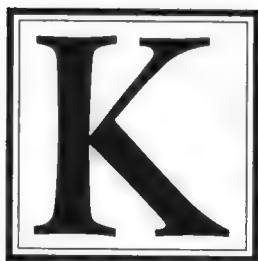
Scene One: The PCs meet in the Hobbit-hole of the Greenthumbs. Introductions are made where necessary. They plan the release of Tolman from the lockhouse.

Scene Two: The PCs sneak to the lockhouse and get Tolman out of it. They retreat to the Chetwood.

Scene Three: The PCs plan the defeat of the Trolls and then go do it. Gandalf happens by afterward and urges the PCs to go get the Troll's treasure.

Scene Four: The PCs encounter Nat Groathusk and Gil Mossgrave at the Troll-hole. They defeat the two rogues and find out that the pair have been helping some bandits who attack travellers on the Great East Road. (Naughty, naughty!) The PCs get the Troll-plunder and bring it back to Bree. They are feasted by the entire town at *The Prancing Pony*.

That's it! Now you're as savvy as they come! Skim those character histories and then dive in on page 18!



atie, m'dear, would you hand me my reading glasses? I think they're right behind you, on the sideboard." Uncle Stefan winked at his niece Diana while holding his character fold-out at arm's length. "Deuced if my arms aren't growing shorter all the time! If I didn't know that title said Gallind, there at the top, I'd swear it was Chinese!"

Kate turned to rustle among the catalogs, junk mail, and fliers heaped on the sideboard. "I thought you'd left them upstairs on the bedside table. Are you sure you brought them down? They certainly aren't here!"

"Hmmm. Better hand the book to Stuart while I look. If I know that young whippersnapper, he's already mumbling something about slow, old fuddydiddies under his breath." Stefan grinned, and got up from the table.

"Aw! Dad!" groaned Stuart. "You know I was not either."

Diana giggled. "No, but you did say something about the dilatory habits of a byproduct of cane sugar in the winter months."

Stuart stared. "Good grief! If Dad isn't slower than molasses in January, I'd like to know who is!" Ignoring his verbose cousin, he gripped his pencil more firmly. "Tolman's Strength bonus is a minus two. That's to be expected. He's a Hobbit. Halflings aren't strong, but they're tough and they're sneaky. His Endurance is forty-five, and his Subterfuge bonus is four! He'll be able to sneak past a cavalcade of Dwarves on a still night, and they'll never even know he's there!"

Jennifer shifted in her chair and suddenly sat up straight. "I know where Dad's glasses are! I'd better go get them, because he'll never find them. He left them in my room, because he was reading the directions for replacing the fixture in my lamp so it'll take one of those compact fluorescent bulbs." She hopped up. "I'll be right back. Dad! Dad!"

• THREE •

CHARACTER SUMMARIES

The GM and the players should read aloud the character summaries below. This will familiarize the GM with the personalities of the heroes and heroines in the adventure that's about to begin. And the players will get to know the people who will be their friends amidst the perils soon to beset them.

Each player should use the information to choose one of the characters for his or her own.

The Character Records for the six pre-generated characters are also printed in this section. The numbers for their stats appear in the appropriate blanks on the Records. You should have the players transfer these

numbers *using pencil* onto the Character Records on the individual character fold-outs. As the characters adventure in Middle-earth, these numbers will change. The players will need to be able to erase the old figures and pencil in the new.

Additionally, the gear and other possessions carried by the characters may be lost, given away, or retired from use during the course of their adventures. The equipment with which they start out is printed on the Records here. It too should be transferred in pencil to the Records on the fold-outs. As the PCs gain treasure or receive rewards or gifts, these items may be added to the Records (still in pencil). Lost, stolen, or discarded gear can be erased as necessary.

TOLMAN GREENTHUMB

Tolman (Tom for short) is a Hobbit with a happy-go-lucky outlook and a knack for making friends. He makes his living as a Finder — someone who locates missing things and persons for a fee. Since he is quite successful, his skills are much in demand. He lives in Bree, but unlike most Bree-landers has visited all four farthings of the Shire, as well as the outlying villages near home.

Tolman and his sister Lily share the smial (Hobbit-hole) where they grew up. Both their parents are dead, and save for a bunch of second cousins twice removed the two have no other living relatives. They are the best of good friends, and have a wide acquaintanceship.

News of missing sheep caught Tolman's ear during his last visit to *The Prancing Pony*. He took on the job of finding them and discovered a Troll lurking in the outlying fields of Bree. Unfortunately, not everyone in Bree likes the Greenthumbs. Some of the more dissatisfied Hobbits and Men think Tom's cheerfulness an affront to their own carefully nursed grudges. They convinced the Shirriff that he must arrest the young Finder for poaching the sheep himself to create business during a slow time. The adventure "DAWN COMES EARLY" starts with Tolman in the town lockhouse!

LILY GREENTHUMB

Lily is a talented Hobbit with many interests. She paints landscapes and portraits, bakes goodies for *The Prancing Pony*, and cultivates a variety of herbs in her kitchen garden. She lives in Bree, sharing with her brother Tolman the smial (Hobbit-hole) where they were born.

Due to her brother's odd profession and his tendency to wander, Lily has some unusual friends — a Dwarf (Glain) and an Elf (Rilwen) among them. The majority of Bree-landers are more rigid in their likes and dislikes — mistrusting strangers as do most parochial folk.

Lily received a note from Tolman one evening after he embarked on a search for some missing sheep. He had discovered that a Troll was responsible for the losses, and that the livestock could no longer be restored to their owner! However, he could not convince his uncle, Bree's senior Shirriff, that danger lurked in the pastoral beauty surrounding the town. Holfast insisted on putting Tolman in the lockhouse for a few days on suspicion of poaching.

His sister has gathered their mutual friends to take action before the Troll does some real damage.

GALLIND

Gallind's home is in Rivendell, the magical valley ruled by Elrond Half-elven. All the poetry and song of that place swirled through Gallind's early years, attuning his heart to music. As a Bard, he plays the harp and panpipes, composes songs, and casts spells.

His talents drew friends with complementary interests. He whiled many an afternoon away in the woodlands or the meadows watching the wild life and improvising melodies. Rilwen, an Elf fascinated by the plants and animals of Middle-earth, often accompanied him. And Lauriel, a singer with a golden voice, loved to dance to his music.

At the start of "DAWN COMES EARLY," Gallind is returning with Rilwen from the Grey Havens. His mother and father have departed for the West, leaving their son with all too few clues about the location of a stolen family heirloom.

TATHARÍNA

Tatharína is a healer. She uses herbal remedies for most ailments, but can resort to magical cures for serious illness or injury. She learned the rudiments of herb preparation and application as a child at her foster mother's knee. Some of her fondest memories come from those early lessons.

Several years later, Tatharina departed her home to further her knowledge under the tutelage of Fanuira Edhellammen. She lived in her teacher's hospice in Bree, studying hard in the mornings and playing schoolgirl's games with Lily Greenthumb in the afternoons. Occasionally, Tolman joined the pair for fishing excursions to Crooked Creek.

The three remained friends as the years passed, making it quite natural for the Hobbits to turn to Tatharína for help when the Shirriff refused to believe Tolman's account of a Troll gobbling the townfolk's sheep.

GLÁIN

Gláin was raised in Merlost, the ruined halls of the ancient Dwarven city Belegost. His mother Lís, whose heart burned with the wrongs done to the Dwarves in times past, urged her son to train as a warrior. The boy grew quite proficient with a battle axe, but never developed the lust for revenge that possessed Lís.

Instead, Gláin joined his jovial father in the business of merchant trading. His travels took him far and wide, including many journeys through the town of Bree. Gláin usually stopped at *The Prancing Pony*, and his first encounter with Tolman (involving the hiring of the Finder's skills) took place at the inn.

Over the years, the Dwarf became firm friends with both Greenthumbs, as well as Tatharína. When Tolman ran afoul of the law, Lily naturally asked for Gláin's help.

RILWEN

Rilwen is a naturalist, taking keen enjoyment in the study of Middle-earth's plants and animals. Her pursuit of knowledge about obscure species takes the Half-elf on rambles far beyond the bounds of Rivendell, her home. Although many dangers lurk outside the haven, Rilwen never seems to come to any harm.

Rilwen was born in Mirkwood, but spent only a few years there before her parents travelled over the Misty Mountains to Rivendell. Her sister stopped but briefly in the valley, riding onward to the Grey Havens and the West.

When Gallind rode to the Havens to bid his parents farewell, Rilwen accompanied her friend. On their return home, they stopped in the woods just north of

Bree and were waylaid by the Hobbit Lily. Tolman had rendered Rilwen his Finder's service some years back, and now his sister was asking help on her brother's behalf.



Name: <i>Tolman Greenthumb</i>		CHARACTER RECORD Hobbit Scout		Damage Taken:	Experience Points:																																																																																																																					
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Name: <i>Gallind</i>		CHARACTER RECORD Elf Bard		Damage Taken:	Experience Points:																																																																																																																					
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Agility	NA	+	1	+		=	<u>1</u>	Agility																																																																																																																		
Intelligence	NA	+	2	+		=	<u>2</u>	Intelligence																																																																																																																		
Movement	NA	+	1	+		=	<u>1</u>	Movement																																																																																																																		
Defense	NA	+	1	+		=	<u>1</u>	Defense																																																																																																																		
Melee OB	<u>1</u>	+	-1	+	(Quarterstaff, +1 damage)	=	<u>0</u>	Melee OB																																																																																																																		
Missile OB	<u>-2</u>	+	0	+	(Bow)	=	<u>-2</u>	Missile OB																																																																																																																		
General	<u>-2</u>	+	0	+		=	<u>-2</u>	General																																																																																																																		
Subterfuge	<u>-2</u>	+	-1	+		=	<u>-3</u>	Subterfuge																																																																																																																		
Perception	<u>1</u>	+	1	+		=	<u>2</u>	Perception																																																																																																																		
Magical	<u>2</u>	+	2	+	+I (Harp)	=	<u>5</u>	Magical																																																																																																																		
Endurance	NA	+	30	+		=	<u>30</u>	Endurance																																																																																																																		

Name: <i>Tatharina</i>				CHARACTER RECORD Human Bard			Damage Taken:		Experience Points:	
BONUSES							Equipment: Leather Armor, Quarterstaff, 2 Daggers backpack, belt & pouch, 3 days food & water			
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	=	Total	STAT	Other Gear: magical bracelet	
Strength	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	<u>0</u>	Strength	Herbs: 5 cones of Nightrod (a cone heals 1-2 hits)	
Agility	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	<u>0</u>	Agility	3 plumes of Fishfeather (a plume heals 1-4 hits)	
Intelligence	NA	+	2	+	_____	=	<u>2</u>	Intelligence	2 petals of Hart's Glory (a petal heals 2-8 hits)	
Movement	NA	+	0	+	_____ -I (Leather Armor)	=	<u>-1</u>	Movement	1 leaf of Snowbane (a leaf heals 2-10 hits)	
Defense	NA	+	0	+	__+2 (Leather Armor, Bracelet)	=	<u>2</u>	Defense	1 Gemberry (a berry heals 10 hits)	
Melee OB	<u>-2</u>	+	0	+	___ (Quarterstaff, +I damage)	=	<u>-2</u>	Melee OB	Spells: Healing, Charm Animal, Calm, Camouflage	
Missile OB	<u>-2</u>	+	-1	+	_____ -I (Dagger, -I damage)	=	<u>-4</u>	Missile OB	Notes:	
General	<u>1</u>	+	0	+	_____	=	<u>1</u>	General		
Subterfuge	<u>-2</u>	+	-1	+	_____ -I (Leather Armor)	=	<u>-4</u>	Subterfuge		
Perception	<u>1</u>	+	2	+	_____	=	<u>3</u>	Perception		
Magical	<u>2</u>	+	2	+	_____	=	<u>4</u>	Magical		
Endurance	NA	+	35	+	_____	=	<u>35</u>	Endurance		

Name: <i>Glaín</i>				CHARACTER RECORD Dwarf Warrior			Damage Taken:		Experience Points:		
BONUSES							Equipment: Magical Battle-axe, Spear, Chain Armor, backpack, belt & pouch, 3 days food & water Other Gear: tinder & flint, pack of playing cards, dice, small tent Notes:				
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	= Total					STAT
Strength	NA	+	2	+		= 2					Strength
Agility	NA	+	-1	+		= -1					Agility
Intelligence	NA	+	0	+		= 0					Intelligence
Movement	NA	+	0	+	-2 (Chain Armor)	= -2					Movement
Defense	NA	+	0	+	+2 (Chain Armor)	= 2					Defense
Melee OB	2	+	2	+	+2 (Battle-axe, +3 damage)	= 6					Melee OB
Missile OB	2	+	0	+	-1 (Spear)	= 1					Missile OB
General	1	+	1	+		= 2					General
Subterfuge	-2	+	1	+	-2 (Chain Armor)	= -3					Subterfuge
Perception	1	+	0	+		= 1					Perception
Magical	-2	+	-3	+	-2 (Chain Armor)	= -7					Magical
Endurance	NA	+	60	+		= 60	Endurance				

Name: <i>Rilwen</i>				CHARACTER RECORD Half-elf Ranger				Damage Taken:		Experience Points:		
BONUSES										Equipment: Sword, Shield, Bow & 20 Arrows, backpack, belt & pouch, 3 days food & water Other Gear: pendant, cloak Herbs: 4 seeds of Arrowweed (a seed heals 1-3 hits) 3 spines of Witchbriar (a spine heals 1-5 hits) Notes:		
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	.	=	Total	STAT			
Strength	NA	+	0	+				=	0			Strength
Agility	NA	+	1	+				=	1			Agility
Intelligence	NA	+	1	+				=	1			Intelligence
Movement	NA	+	1	+				=	1			Movement
Defense	NA	+	1	+	+I (Shield)			=	2			Defense
Melee OB	1	+	-1	+	(Sword, +I damage)			=	0			Melee OB
Missile OB	1	+	1	+	(Bow)			=	2			Missile OB
General	2	+	1	+				=	3			General
Subterfuge	-2	+	0	+				=	-2			Subterfuge
Perception	1	+	1	+				=	2			Perception
Magical	1	+	0	+	-I (Shield)			=	0			Magical
Endurance	NA	+	35	+				=	35	Endurance		



ll of you are gathered in the sitting room of the Greenthumb's Hobbit-hole. It's a cozy place. The armchairs and couch are well-cushioned and upholstered in a flowery print." Barnabas pulled a sheet of paper out of the box on the table in front of him. "Here's a floorplan of the room. Uncle Stef, where is Gallind sitting? Or is he standing?"

"He's sitting, but not on a chair or the couch," answered Stefan. "He's on the floor. Why don't I just put this cardboard figure by the hearth where he is gazing into the flames."

"Perfect," agreed his nephew. "If the rest of you will do the same, then we'll all know where everybody is sitting or standing. Have you got your figures ready? That's right, Jenny. Just fold the cardboard in half and place it in this plastic base."

"Everyone but me, right Barney?" insisted Stuart. "Tolman's stuck in the lockhouse, isn't he?"

"Right, you are, kiddo. Let me finish describing the room. 'Despite the warm summer breeze blowing in through the open windows, a small, cheery fire burns in the hearth.' Good thing, since Gallind wants to stare into the flames. 'A wooden cupboard on one wall holds pewter mugs and stoneware bowls. The front door of the smial opens right onto the sitting room. An archway connects the sitting room to the dining room, and three other closed doors are visible.' Okay. That's it."

• FOUR •

SCENE I: THE HOBBIT-HOLE

Scene One starts the ball rolling with two *sequences*. "AT YOUR SERVICE!" allows each player to get to know the characters of the other players in the *activity* of conversation.

FELLOW CONSPIRATORS is filled with the *activity* of planning Tolman's release from the lockhouse.

"AT YOUR SERVICE!"

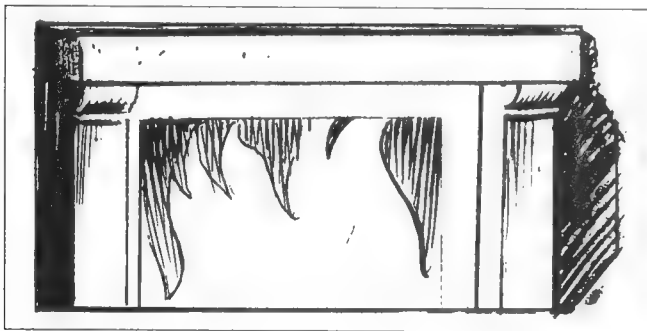
The history of each player character (PC) ends at the point where he or she has arrived at the home of Lily and Tolman Greenthumb. (Tolman himself is, of course, stuck in the lockhouse.)

You will find a floorplan of the Greenthumb smial on one of the sheets of heavy stock that were originally stapled to the character fold-outs. (*Smial* is the Hobbit word for a Hobbit-hole.) The PCs are gathered in the sitting room of the smial. A floorplan of the sitting room is also available. Put both floorplans on the table where you and the players can see them easily.

You should now describe the sitting room to the players by reading aloud the text highlighted below.

All of you are gathered in the sitting room of the Greenthumb's Hobbit-hole. It's a cozy place. The armchairs and couch are well-cushioned and upholstered in a flowery print. Despite the warm summer breeze blowing in through the open windows, a small, cheery fire burns in the hearth. A wooden cupboard on one wall holds pewter mugs and stoneware bowls. The front door of the smial opens right onto the sitting room. An archway connects the sitting room to the dining room, and three other closed doors are visible.

Instruct the players to place their stand-up cardboard figures on the floorplan of the sitting room to indicate where their characters are located.



Although many of the characters are well known to one another, the players will be familiar with only their own characters. Now is a good time for each player to introduce his or her character to the other players. You should suggest that each player give a short description of the appearance of his or her character and tell the nature of his or her relationship to the other characters. You may read the text highlighted below or use your own words.

Many of your characters know each other very well. However, you, the players, don't know any of the other characters right now. Let's take time for each of you to introduce your character to the other players. Tell everyone your character's name, what he or she looks like, and the nature of his or her relationship — friend, relative, or stranger — to the other characters present.

GM NOTE

The physical location of buildings or vegetation or other objects is usually communicated verbally by the GM to the players. Sometimes a map or floorplan is used in addition to make clear more complex arrangements.

When the location of the characters is important, markers representing them can be placed on a map or floorplan to show their position. The position of the characters in the Greenthumb sitting room is unimportant, but using markers in this situation will help all of you to get used to the concept.

LOR provides you with stand-up cardboard figures for the PCs and the most significant NPCs. However, many other options are equally suitable.

If coins are used, a penny heads up might represent Lily, a nickel tails up indicate Gláin, a nickel heads up Tatharína, a dime heads up Rilwen, and a dime tails up Gallind. Reserve a penny tails up for Tolman.

Another common way of representing characters is the use of small cardboard squares, called counters. A counter is half an inch on each side and labeled with the appropriate name. Perhaps you have some cardboard in the house from the last batch of shirts that went to the dry cleaners. If so, you can fashion some of these square counters right now using scissors and pen. Decorating them with felt-tip markers or colored pencils will add to the flavor of play.

Using a chalk board or simply pencil, paper, and eraser is a quick and easy method of showing the tactical situation.

Miniatures, small pewter sculptures roughly three-quarters of an inch high, provide another appealing way to represent characters. Most hobby stores carry a range of Elf, Dwarf, Human, and "Halfling" figures (as well as beasts or monsters such as wolves or Trolls) from which to choose. However, coins, counters, or stand-up figures will work equally well. You needn't rush out and buy miniatures in order to have fun role playing!

EXAMPLE

A player who has chosen Lily Greenthumb might say: "My character is Lily Greenthumb. Lily is a Hobbit and therefore quite short." Players often use the first person pronoun when speaking of their characters. "I have blue eyes, shoulder-length hair the color of honey, and am wearing a dress of pale blue muslin. Tolman, who we are here to rescue, is my brother. Gláin, Tatharína, and Rilwen are all friends of mine. I have never met Gallind before this evening."

After introductions have been made, the players may wish to socialize with each other, experimenting some with their new roles. You should encourage them to do so — this is an excellent way for the players to accustom themselves to role playing. After ten or fifteen minutes of general conversation, however, they should make plans to rescue Tolman from the lockhouse.

FELLOW CONSPIRATORS

You might urge the players to begin planning with the statement below.

Now that you all know a bit about each other, it's time to consider the task for which you've gathered here: the release of Tolman from the lockhouse. How do you want to do the rescue? You need to make some plans.

Once the players have decided to use stealth (if they aren't leaning in that direction, try some of the tips in the GM Note) in the rescue of Tolman, the specifics will need to be debated and determined. A list of the most essential elements follows. You may need to prompt the players to consider each of these items.

Use the chart on page 22 of *The Guidelines*, or a copy of the chart, to record *experience points (EPs)* earned by each PC during the discussion that ensues. Any player who voices one of the questions below or answers it should be rewarded: award his or her PC the *EPs (experience points)* suggested in parentheses at the end of the item. Just note the number down under the *Idea* column of the chart.

GM NOTE

Characters will become more powerful and skillful as they gain experience from their adventures. In *LOR*, experience is represented by *experience points (EPs)* which are awarded by the GM for good ideas, successful maneuvers, combat, spell casting, or meeting the challenges presented by an adventure.

The GM should keep a record of the *EPs (experience points)* earned by the PCs throughout the adventure. At the end of the adventure, the GM can total the numbers recorded and tell each player how many *EPs* his or her character earned.

This adventure includes suggestions in the text for the experience earned for specific ideas and the completion of certain tasks. However, you should review the paragraph in *The Guidelines* on page 22 for guidelines concerning *EPs* for *maneuvers*, hitting an opponent in combat, and casting a spell.

- What time will the PCs approach the lockhouse? It is not guarded, so the main concern will be to avoid chance passersby. The hours between midnight and four in the morning see little traffic in the streets of Bree. (*Experience Points: 3*)
- What route will they take through town to the lockhouse? It would be well to avoid the environs of *The Prancing Pony*, where even the wee hours may have more activity than other parts of Bree. Several of the PCs should be intimately familiar with the town. Encourage the players to use the map of Bree while planning their route. (*Experience Points: 4*)
- Will they attempt entry via the window on Tolman's cell or the door? The window is directly accessible from Callow Market, but it is secured by bars. Ten rusty screws hold the bars to the molding. The door is secured by a padlock. However, it opens onto a hall. The main door of the lockhouse would have to be breached to reach this hall, and it is also secured by a lock. (*Experience Points: 10*)
- What tools will they bring? A screwdriver will be needed for entry via the cell window, lockpicks for the door, and perhaps a hacksaw or bolt cutter for an interior padlock. (*Experience Points: 7*)

GM NOTE

Three obvious methods for rescuing Tolman will suggest themselves: force, persuasion, or stealth. The players should be dissuaded from using force. A bloody attack on the warmhearted folk of Bree would likely result in the player characters being shunned by all the Free Peoples of Middle-earth!

Holfast Bunce is the well-beloved uncle of Lily Greenthumb, and she would never consent to any plan that involved harm to him or his family. Nor is it likely that Tatharína or Gláin — both acquainted with the Shirriff — would favor force. You may need to remind the players of the affection their characters feel for Holfast and of the fact that there is no guard posted at the lockhouse. (The absence of a guard definitely makes force optional rather than necessary.)

Persuasion might be the most elegant approach, but it is also the least likely to succeed. Holfast is a rather stubborn Hobbit, firmly convinced that his mature viewpoint is the right one. The arguments of his nephew left him unswayed, and those of his niece or her and Tolman's friends would be equally futile. Indeed, the Shirriff might convince the PCs that *his* course of action, waiting for more

sheep to disappear while Tolman is known to be in the lockhouse, is the correct one.

You, the GM, may need to point out these obstacles to success via persuasion. You might also inform the players that Trolls are not averse to eating stray children or wandering townsfolk; the Bree-landers and the PCs cannot count on the Trolls confining their appetites to sheep and goats during the next few days. Shirriff Bunce's "wait and see" approach runs a grave risk.

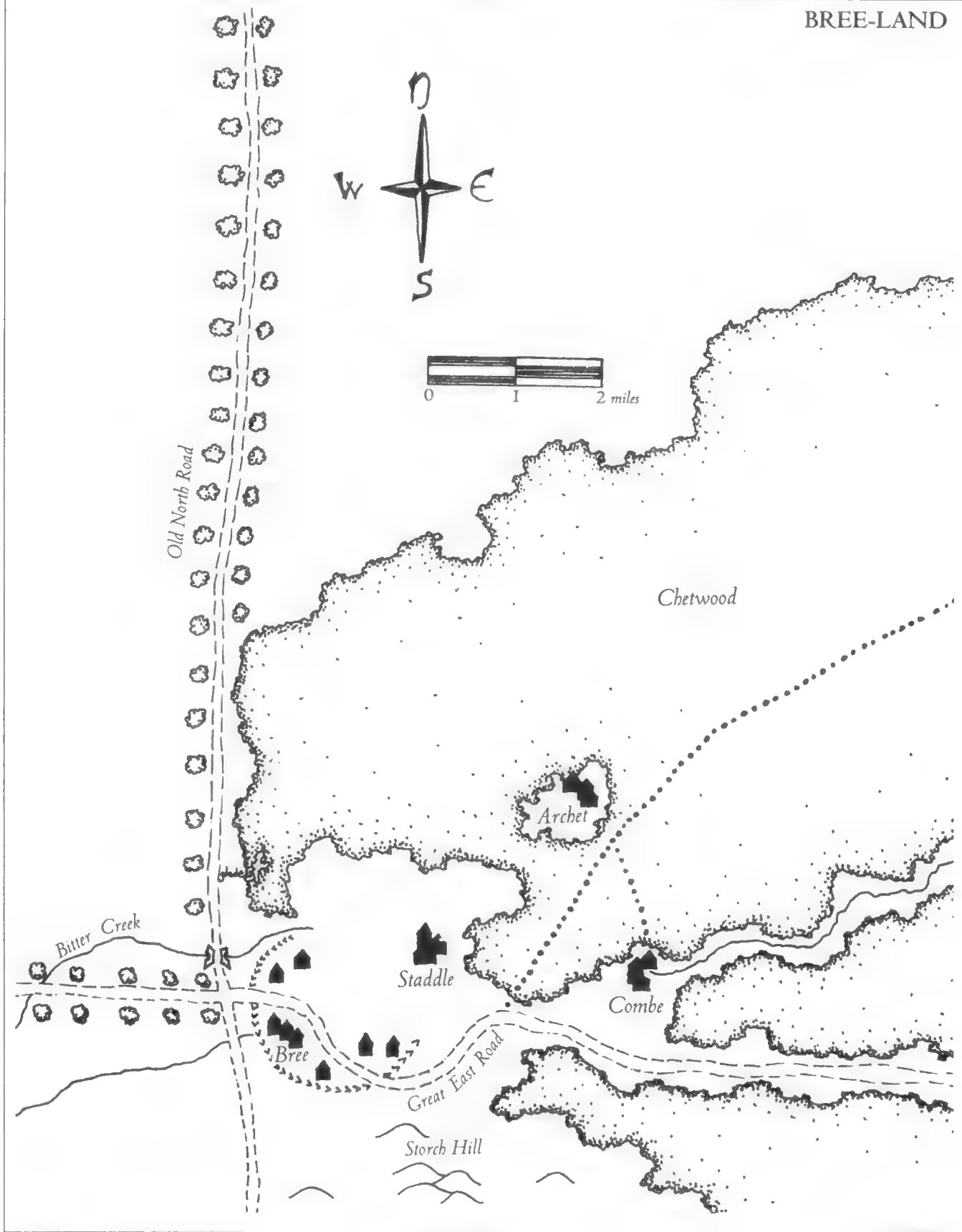
(Although Holfast cannot be swayed by argument, action will convince him. If he catches the PCs during the rescue attempt, he will release Tolman. Naturally, you should not allow the players any hint of this!)

You should encourage the players to settle on stealth. In all likelihood, the information and "reminders" suggested above will enable you to successfully guide all but the most recalcitrant players towards a sneaky approach. If your players are looking for a fight, tell them that a Troll will put up a lot more of a tussle than a comfort-loving Hobbit!

- Who will stand watch while someone picks the lock on the door? It is important that one or two PCs on watch be able to warn the rest of the group, if Holfast Bunce is awakened by a noise or if Gil Mossgrave or Nat Groathusk is prowling the town. (*Experience Points: 6*)
- What will the group do if they are discovered while attempting entry to the lockhouse? They might stay and talk their way out — possibly attempting to persuade Holfast to let them and Tolman go after the Troll. They might run away, intending to return later and try again. (*Experience Points: 8*)
- What will the group do if they are discovered after gaining entry to Tolman's cell? Running away with Tolman becomes a more attractive option, if they have enough of a headstart. (*Experience Points: 12*)
- Who will pick the lock on the door? Someone with a high *Subterfuge* skill should attempt this task. (*Experience Points: 5*)
- Who will attempt to remove the bars from the window? A PC with a high *Strength* bonus should do this task. Will more than one PC work on the bolts at the same time? (*Experience Points: 5*)
- Where will they go after successfully releasing Tolman? The Greenthumbs' smial would be the first place for Holfast to check once he discovered Tolman's absence. The glade where Lily went to find Rilwen is a less known spot where they might regroup and plan for the next part of the adventure: confronting the Trolls. Encourage the players to use the map of Bree-land while planning their escape route. (*Experience Points: 6*)

When the group has finished planning and is ready to begin executing their plan, turn to SCENE 2: THE LOCKHOUSE.

BREE-LAND





stay a moment!" whispered Tatharína. "Did you see that? Why under the stars is Gil Mossgrave skulking around town? I don't like it. Don't like it at all!"

Gláin, walking beside the Beorning woman, shrugged his shoulders and muttered, "Up to mischief, no doubt. I know his sort. Softly, now. Unless you want to rouse the neighborhood, we'd best hush!"

The Dwarf pulled his hood farther forward, to shadow his face, and moved deeper into the shadows. A small hand tucked itself into his and pulled him along. Lily the Hobbit-maid remained shrouded in the darkness, invisible to Gláin's eyes even while he followed the tugging she exerted on his arm. He wondered if anyone could see Lily when she wished to stay hidden. Perhaps Tolman her brother had sufficiently sharp eyes.

A light went on in the upper window of the Purslane house. Gláin cursed under his breath and hurried in response to Lily's suddenly swifter pace. Abbot Purslane was notoriously nosy, and avoiding the Man was the only sure way of avoiding his questions!

• FIVE •

SCENE 2: THE LOCKHOUSE

This scene is composed of four *action sequences*.

SNEAKING THROUGH BREE (sneaking through town by night) involves approaching the lockhouse unperceived.

CONVERGING ON THE CAPTIVE (getting into position) is a short *sequence* in which the PCs get ready to breach the barred window or locked door of the lockhouse.

UNLOCKING THE LOCKHOUSE (breaking & entering) involves actually gaining entry to the lockhouse and Tolman's cell.

SEEKING SHADOWS (retreating from a site) sees the PCs to safety outside town.

Remember to note down *experience points* earned by the PCs as they make *maneuvers* and cast spells in these *action sequences*.

SNEAKING THROUGH BREE



When the PCs exit the Greenthumbs' smial to go to the lockhouse, the summer night surrounds them. Describe the scene as they walk out the front door.

Outside, crickets are singing, and the scents of mint and lavender from Lily's herb garden drift on the breeze. A dirt lane passes by the front stoop of the Greenthumb smial, running between the hedged vegetable gardens and quaint cottages that comprise Bree. Few lights are visible in the sleeping town, and no movement stirs on its roads.

Have one of the players trace the route the PCs take as they approach the lockhouse. It will probably duplicate the one they developed in the planning session. However, this time it indicates an action being taken by the group.

• Now, go to stage 2.

2

Ask each player what his or her character is doing to move quietly and to pass unseen. Based on this information, assign bonuses or penalties to each character. Use the chart on page 24 of *The Guidelines* to guide your choice of bonuses and penalties.

- Next, go to stage 3.

GM NOTE

To speed play, you may choose to allow the group to arrive at the lockhouse unchallenged. However, encounters that threaten slightly the success of the undertaking will add more spice to the experience.

To convey more reality to the nighttime raid, you should at the very least have one player *roll the dice* to determine for the entire group how quietly they move along their route. Sneaking along a dirt road at night when no other travelers are present is not a very difficult maneuver, but a spectacularly noisy display of klutziness might wake those sleeping in the nearest dwelling.

The maneuver has a difficulty rating of *Easy*. On the maneuver chart on page 5 of *The Guidelines*, *Easy* corresponds to $\Delta 6$. Thus, sneaking to the lockhouse is a *Subterfuge* $\Delta 6$ maneuver. In other words, the total of the dice roll plus any bonuses and minus any penalties must be 6 or higher.

3

One by one, instruct each player to *roll the dice* to determine how stealthily his or her character moves.

In this context, sneaking is an *Easy* maneuver. Since the difficulty rating of *Easy* corresponds to a $\Delta 6$, and because sneaking uses the *Subterfuge* skill, we call it a *Subterfuge* $\Delta 6$ maneuver.

Each character must obtain a total of 6 or more, including penalties or bonuses, when he or she *rolls the dice*. You may use the chart on page 24 of *The Guidelines* to translate the die roll into describable results.

Tell each player how well (or poorly) his or her character does. You may wish to extrapolate from the descriptions on the chart to add variety.

- Go to stage 4.

EXAMPLE

GM: What is Tatharina doing to ensure that she makes little noise and otherwise avoids drawing attention to herself?

Tatharina's player: I am wearing soft, leather slippers, rather than my sturdier boots, and have drawn the hood of my cloak up to cover my hair and overshadow my face. I have no real skill in *Subterfuge*, so I am just moving as carefully as I can, trying to stay in the shadows."

GM: Fine. *Roll the dice* to determine how quietly you move and how well you stay in the shadows. Sneaking along a dirt road at night is an *Easy* maneuver. Your dice roll plus your *Subterfuge* skill and any other bonuses must yield 6 or more. Since you are wearing soft shoes, you may add a bonus of +1 to your roll.

(Tatharina's player rolls a 4 on one die and a 3 on the other, yielding a total of 7. Her *Subterfuge* skill is -2, so 7 minus 2 is 5. Adding +1 for her soft shoes yields 6. She succeeds in sneaking along the route to the lockhouse.)

GM: The packed earth of the road feels very hard, and the rocks and pebbles hurt a little, but your footfalls are not audible to your ears.

4

Whether the PCs succeeded in moving stealthily or not determines what happens next.

- If one or more of the characters obtained a roll below 6, you should go immediately to stage 9 of this action sequence.
- Otherwise, if every character obtained a roll of 6 or higher, the group passes through the town unnoticed and unbinders. Go to stage 5.

5

Describe what the PCs hear and see as they walk through Bree. Instruct one of the players to *roll the dice* to determine how much detail the group observes as the PCs proceed. (This is important, since Gil Mossgrave is spying on them.)

- For a dice roll of 1-4, go to stage 6.
- For a dice roll of 5-8, go to stage 7.
- For a dice roll of 9-12, go to stage 8.

GM NOTE

As explained earlier, the number of choices allowed by this adventure are limited for simplicity's sake, permitting you to enjoy your first taste of role playing without being bewildered by too many options at once. If you were running this adventure after several months of experience with gamemastering, you might give the PCs a chance to see more than Gil Mossgrave's silhouette.

Realizing the identity of the spy, they might choose to leave Tolman in the lockhouse, while pursuing Mossgrave, capturing him, and questioning his involvement in the activities of the Troll. Depending on the effectiveness of their skills, they might learn that there are two Trolls, not merely one, and that a Bandit-king and his men are attempting to prolong the Olog menace. However, we recommend that you not add this complexity to the adventure at this point in time. The PCs will obtain these facts by the end of this adventure and be ready to bring justice to the bandits in the next one.

6

Hobbit smials line the left side of the lane as it descends down a gentle slope, while gardens and small greens occupy the right hand side. You notice that moles have been digging among And-man Poggin's cabbages and that Amaryllis Banks has left her hoe out to rust in the dew. Further along the road stand the cottages of Men, each attended by an adjacent vegetable garden, and a few possessing shops (now closed for the night) on their ground floor. At last the Bunces' house, a small knoll from which peer round windows and a round door, comes into sight. Attached to the Bunce residence is the lockhouse: a rectangular affair of half-timber and plaster with its roof shingled in slate.

You should now turn to page 27 for the next *action sequence*: CONVERGING ON THE CAPTIVE.



7

Hobbit smials line the left side of the lane as it descends down a gentle slope, while gardens and small greens occupy the right hand side. You notice that moles have been digging among And-man Poggin's cabbages and that Amaryllis Banks has left her hoe out to rust in the dew. Mongo Clayhill's dog has gnawed through its rope once again and is nowhere to be seen. Since Woofey always barks at any one in the lane, his absence is a benefit — as long as he doesn't reappear at the lockhouse later!

Farther along the road stand the cottages of Men, each attended by an adjacent vegetable garden, and a few possessing shops (now closed for the night) on their ground floors. The upper windows of the Purslane cottage are all alight, and you know they are probably up with their colicky infant. If only they don't send for the healer. Abbot Purslane is notoriously nosey and would ask some uncomfortable questions if he encountered the group on his way to Fanuira's hospice.

At last the Bunces' house, a small knoll from which peer round windows and a round door, comes into sight. Attached to the Bunce residence is the lockhouse: a rectangular affair of half-timber and plaster with its roof shingled in slate.

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Further along the road stand the cottages of Men, each attended by an adjacent vegetable garden, and a few possessing shops (now closed for the night) on their ground floors. The upper windows of the Purslane cottage are all alight, and you know they are probably up with their colicky infant. If only they don't send for the healer. Abbot Purslane is notoriously nosey and would ask some uncomfortable questions if he encountered the group on his way to Fanuira's hospice.

A shadow flits across the road ahead of you. The silhouette looks vaguely familiar. Yet, why would Gil Mossgrave be prowling tonight? An eye's blink later, the ambiguous shape is gone. When you look down the alley into which the amorphous patch of darkness disappeared, you see only three cottages and the meadow beyond them. Sheets ruffle in the breeze on a clothes line.

At last the Bunces' house, a small knoll from which peer round windows and a round door, comes into sight. Attached to the Bunce residence is the lockhouse: a rectangular affair of half-timber and plaster with its roof shingled in slate.

You should now turn to page 27 for the next *action sequence*: **CONVERGING ON THE CAPTIVE**.

How much noise was made and who has seen the PCs are the most important factors. Use the lowest dice rolls from *stage 3* to determine the reactions of the citizenry of Bree.

- A roll of 4 or 5 (but not lower): *go to stage 10*.
- A roll of 2 or 3 (but not lower): *go to stage 11*.
- A roll of 1: *go to stage 12*.

Andman Poggin is having a sleepless night. Rather than pondering his aching bones while counting sheep, he is surveying the town through his window. When _____ (fill in the blank with the names of the appropriate character or characters) pop(s) out of the shadows under the old Hobbit's gaze, he whistles softly and leans his elbows on the sill. (The PCs may make a *Very Easy* Perception maneuver to determine if they notice him.) Being an easy-going sort, he settles in with anticipation for some unexpected amusement. He has no intention of meddling in what doesn't concern him.

If someone in the group rolls the dice to make a Perception maneuver *and obtains a 5 or higher*, you may read the paragraph above to them.

If no one in the group wishes to make a Perception roll or if the observant PC *obtains a result lower than 5*, tell the players that although they were not particularly sneaky, no one has been disturbed by their passage through town.

You should then *return immediately to stage 5* of this *action sequence*.

As Mongo Clayhill's dog bounds away from the group, an amused whisper sounds from the shadows: "I hope you're merely bent on a stargazing party, because you're not being very sneaky! The almanac says there will be shooting stars tonight."

Then Hepatica Spurge, the old crone who lives in the Chetwood alone and gathers acorns for a living, steps into the moonlight. Her gray hair is wildly tangled, her nose decidedly beaky, and her wrinkled hands sport long, ragged nails. Despite her alarming appearance, Hepatica is among the few people the group need not fear encountering. "Don't tell me your business — I don't need to know. But do take better care if it's secret!" The old woman scuttles down an alley toward the meadows south of town.

You should now *return to stage 5* of this *action sequence* — describing to the group what they observe as they continue their walk to the lockhouse.

The door to the smial of Amaryllis Banks' smial pops open, and the widow emerges. Her hair is rolled and secured with pins whose spiky forms create a strange texture under an orange scarf. Amaryllis wears a faded wrapper — she has obviously just awakened and leapt from her bed — but sleep is far from her choleric eyes.

"I've my iron frying pan, you scoundrels, so don't think you can cow me! I'll knock you silly with it, if you try anything!" She pauses, peering through the darkness to see who has made such a racket on her property. "You'd think a widowed Hobbit might be safe in her own home!"

"I see you now! Lily Greenthumb, you should be ashamed of yourself! And Gláin and Tatharina, too! Well! Taking up with Elves, I see. You'll find it's a grave mistake. Mark my words! A very grave mistake!"

She makes the following speech before retiring to bed: "If Rose were alive, I'd have a word with her. You'd do well to remember your mother, Lily. Creeping around by night when any decent body is asleep. I'll see you in the morning, and we can discuss reparation for my fence that you've ruined! Humph!" With this final venting of anger, the Hobbit-widow bustles back indoors.

You should now *return to stage 5* of this *action sequence* — describing to the group what they observe as they continue their walk to the lockhouse.

CONVERGING ON THE CAPTIVE

Callow Market lies still and empty in the moonlight. Show the map of the market, where the lockhouse is located, to the players. Describe the scene.

The lockhouse is located on the far side of Callow Market. As you emerge from the lane into open space, someone snuffs a candle in the shoemaker's cottage. The square of light cast from its garret window disappears, leaving the market dark under the night sky.

There are two cells in the lockhouse. The PCs need to determine which one holds their friend before taking position around the building. Ask the players: who will go to discover where Tolman is held? Lily and Gláin, with their *Subterfuge* skills, are likely candidates for this job. Or Rilwen, a Ranger, might volunteer.

Have the volunteer trace with a finger his or her route across the market and along the walls of the lockhouse. Have him or her make another *Subterfuge* roll to maintain the illusion of danger with the chance of success or failure. Describe what he or she experiences.

Uneven cobblestones make footing a bit tricky as you cross the market. A cloud passes before the moon, further darkening the area. When you arrive at the lockhouse and peer through the window of the foremost cell, you see an unoccupied pallet in the empty room. A mouse scurries across the sagging floor. Then the moon sails free of its temporary veil, and you confront your own face, reflected in the glass pane at your nose.

Around the corner of the building, another window invites your attention. You must cup your fingers around your eyes to seal out the moonlight. Tumbled blankets on the narrow cot and a mop of curly hair on the pillow indicate that you've found the right cell.

An owl hoots and you glance away. Another window on the adjacent wall attracts your interest. The lockhouse has but two cells. What lies in this extra chamber? A quick glimpse answers your question. The desk littered with papers, the walls hung with maps of Bree and the surrounding fields, and Holfast's walking stick propped in a corner prove the room to be the Shirriff's office.

The scouting PC may now beckon the rest of the group to join him or her at the lockhouse or go fetch them.

• *Go to stage 3.*

EXAMPLE

GM: There are two cells in the lockhouse. Which one of you will go scouting to see whether Tolman is in the front cell or the back?

Tatharina's player: Tatharina, will you cast a Camouflage spell on me?

Tatharina's player: Indeed, yes. Excellent idea, Rilwen!

Rilwen's player: Then I'll go to find Tolman.

GM: Alright. Tatharina, roll the dice to see if you succeed in casting the spell.

(Tatharina obtains a 5. Her *Magical skill* is +2. The dice roll plus her skill yields a total of 7, the lowest result that allows success.)

Tatharina's player: Phew! That was a little close!

GM: Remember to mark a 3 under *Damage Taken*, Tatharina. Now, Rilwen, you're looking a little shadowy around the edges. Make a *Subterfuge* maneuver roll and add +2 for the results of the spell.

(Rilwen obtains a 9. Her *Subterfuge skill* is -2. The dice roll plus the spell minus her skill yields a total of 9, a very respectable result.)

GM: Even your friends have a hard time seeing you as you move toward the lockhouse. Show me on the map where you go.

Rilwen's player (pointing): I skirt the edge of the Market, passing the blacksmith and the Dittanys' house, then pausing in the shadow of this hedge. Then I sneak by the shoemaker's home and creep to the window of the front cell of the lockhouse.

GM: To the rest of you — Lily, Gláin, Tatharina, and Gallind — Rilwen looks like a moving patch of shadow, cast by a hurry cloud, as she moves away.

Rilwen, uneven cobblestones makes footing a bit tricky as you walk toward the lockhouse. However, you arrive there unhindered. When you peer through the window of the foremost cell, you see an unoccupied pallet in the otherwise empty room. A mouse scurries across the sagging floor.

3

Ask each player to describe the position of his or her character around the lockhouse. You may wish to use the stand-up figures and the floorplan of the lockhouse.

You should now go to the next *action sequence*: UNLOCKING THE LOCKHOUSE.

UNLOCKING THE LOCKHOUSE

I

Ask each PC standing guard to describe the areas he or she is watching most closely. Then describe the quiet nighttime scene witnessed by them as they keep their eyes open for unexpected intruders.

Across the fields behind the lockhouse, the dark mass of the hedge protecting Bree's perimeter looms dimly. A few sheep graze the enclosed meadow, and the rasping chorus of crickets floats on the breeze.

In the other direction, stone or half-timber cottages dot the hill that shelters the town's northeastern flank. Lamplight shines from the windows of one or two, but the majority lie in shadows cast by the moon.

Only from *The Prancing Pony*, near the West-gate, can sounds of life be heard. Laughter and shouted jests, considerably subdued by the distance, mingle with the insect song and evening breezes in a comforting lullaby.

- If the PCs plan to force open the window of Tolman's cell, go to stage 2.
- If the PCs will try to gain entry through the office window of the lockhouse, go to stage 5.
- If the PCs intend to force the main door of the lockhouse, go to stage 6.

The PCs not standing watch should be gathered at the window, attempting to remove the bars from the aperture. Describe the window to the players.

The window is unsecured by a lock, since the Shirriff trusts the bars placed outside its panes to prevent escape by occupants of the cell. The lower sash may be easily raised using the brass-plated handholds on its bottom edge. Four vertical iron bars, welded to one horizontal rod, are bolted into the wooden frame surrounding the window. To remove the bars, you will need to remove all ten screws holding them. Rust will make the job time consuming.

• Go to stage 3.

EXAMPLE

Suppose the PCs were able to scrounge only two screwdrivers, one from the gardening shed at the hospice (Tatharina's home) and one from Gláin's tool box in his wagon.

The group decides that Gláin and Rilwen will remove the window bars.

Gláin's player *rolls the dice* five times to determine how quickly his character works. He obtains: 7, 8, 6, 4, and 11. Adding Gláin's *Strength bonus* to these results yields: 9, 10, 8, 6, and 13 or two minutes for each of the first four bolts and one minute for the last, a total of 9 minutes.

Rilwen's player also *rolls the dice*. Her first four rolls are 2, 11, 12, and 5, yielding a total of 10 minutes.

Since Rilwen is still working on her fourth bolt when Gláin finishes his fifth, the Dwarf tackles the last remaining bolt. He rolls a 9, requiring two more minutes to finish his work.

The entire process takes only eleven minutes.

As soon as the PCs start work on the window bars, if not sooner, Tolman wakes. Describe the situation to the player role playing the Hobbit.

A light tap on the window interrupts the vague thoughts passing through your head. You open your eyes and realize that you've been asleep. The squares of light on the cobblestones outside, cast by the uncurtained casements of the shoemaker next door, are gone. Silver moonlight fills the air, and your friends are gathered at the window of your cell. You may roll out of bed to push the sash up and breathe a greeting to your friends, if you wish.

Encourage the players to engage in a short, whispered conversation between their characters.

With the proper tools (in this case, screwdriver), removing the bars from the cell window is an *activity* rather than a *maneuver*. Attempting an *activity*, the PCs automatically succeed. However, the time taken before success occurs is variable.

Each character should *role the dice* for each screw he or she attempts to remove. The result plus his or her *Strength bonus* will determine the number of minutes required to remove the screw. No more than three PCs can work on loosening the window bars at once.

Keep track of how long it takes the PCs to remove all ten screws.

Dice Roll + Bonus	Minutes
0	10
2-4	5
5-11	2
12-14	1
15+	0.5

If the PCs require more than 15 minutes to remove the bars from the window, they should be startled by some harmless, but disconcerting, interruption. Perhaps Woofey, the dog belonging to one of the Greenthumbs' neighbors, trots up with tongue lolling out of his mouth and the happy certainty in his canine mind of a welcome reception from his "friends."

• Go to stage 4.

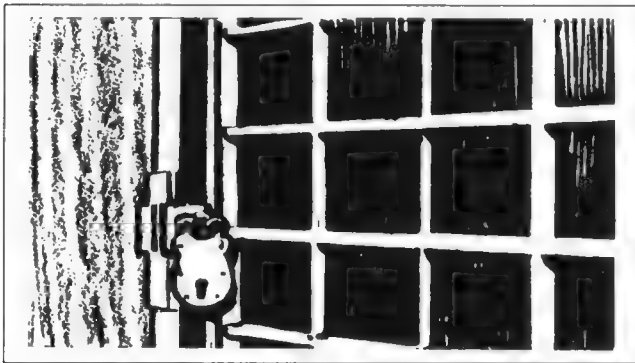
4

Describe the process of lowering the bars after the last bolt is out.

With the last bolt out, the bars are surprisingly heavy. With some effort, you lower them to the ground and prop them against the lockhouse wall. Tolman is free to hop over the window sill to liberty.

Once Tolman is outside, the PCs may wish to close the window and replace the bars (using but one or two screws to keep them in place). This could delay the discovery of the Hobbit's escape until breakfast time.

You should now turn to page 33 for the next *action sequence*: SEEKING SHADOWS.

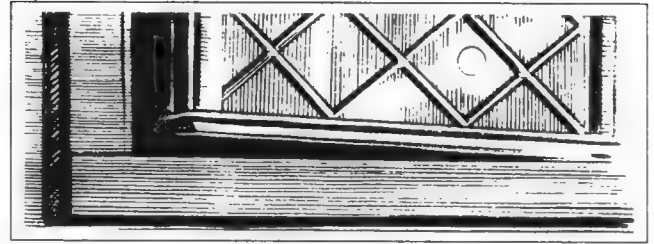


5

The PCs not standing guard should be gathered at the office window, checking to see if it is locked. Describe the window to the players.

The window is not only unsecured by a lock, but its lower sash is partially raised to allow fresh air into the room. You need only push it fully open and climb over the low sill to gain access to the office. A door, also unlocked, swings into the narrow hall giving access to the cells in the lockhouse. Tolman is behind the first grated door on the left.

- Go to stage 8.



6

Those not standing watch should be gathered at the lockhouse door, attempting to pick its lock. Describe the door to the players.

Stout oak planks bound by iron form the lockhouse door. Age has darkened their surfaces to a brackish hue, resembling marsh water by night. Beneath a rusted handle, a key hole gives access to the mechanism securing the door.

Picking the lock is *Hard*. It is a *Subterfuge*Δ9 maneuver. Each PC who tries to pick the lock must achieve a total of 9 or more when he or she rolls the dice and adds his or her *Subterfuge* skill.

- If the PCs succeed in picking the lock, go to stage 7.
- If not, they must choose whether they will try the cell window or the office window.
 - If they try the cell window, go to stage 2.
 - If they try the office window, go to stage 5.

7

When you pull on its handle, the heavy door swings smoothly outward on well-oiled hinges. Inside a narrow hall leads to another door left slightly ajar. The littered desk, visible through the doorway, proclaims the room to be the Shirriff's office.

On the left-hand side of the hall, a larger portal (firmly shut) separates the lockhouse from the Bunce home.

On the right-hand side of the hall, two iron grates guard access to the cells. Tolman is behind the second.

- Go to stage 8.

Describe the hinged grate to the players.

Six vertical strips of iron are welded to eighteen horizontal ones to form a grid of open squares each measuring four inches on a side. Three hinges attach the grate's left side to iron plates set into the door frame, while a large padlock links the right side to a sturdy hasp.

Inside the cell, a furry Hobbit foot pokes from the tumbled blankets on a narrow cot in the far corner.

If not already awakened (perhaps by a tap on the window by one of the PCs standing guard), Tolman opens his eyes as his friends reach the doorway of his cell. Describe the situation to the player role playing the Hobbit.

A light footstep in the hall interrupts the muddled thoughts swirling in your head. You open your eyes and realize that you've been asleep. The squares of light on the cobblestones outside, cast by the uncurtained casements of the shoemaker next door, are gone. Silver moonlight fills the air. Inside the lockhouse, crouched among the shadows on the other side of the grate, your friends are gathered at the doorway of your cell. You may roll out of bed and cross your room to breathe a greeting to them, if you wish.

Encourage the players to engage in a short, whispered conversation between their characters.

Picking the padlock fastening the grate has a *Medium* chance of success. It is a *Subterfuge* $\Delta 8$ maneuver. A PC who tries to pick the lock must achieve a total of 8 or more when he or she rolls the dice and adds his or her *Subterfuge* skill.

- If the PCs succeed in picking the lock, go to stage 9.
- If not, they must choose whether they will try to break the padlock or attempt entry from the outside through the cell window.
 - If they try the cell window, go to stage 2.
 - If they try to break the padlock, go to stage 10.

A quiet click vibrates the interior of the lock, and its U-shaped bar slips free. You may simply lift it from the hasp securing the grate to swing the metal door aside and allow Tolman to step out of his cell. The Hobbit is free!

You may wish to conceal any obvious traces of the lockhouse rescue to delay pursuit by the Shirriffs. Relocking the cell grate behind Tolman as you depart and shutting the _____ (office window or main lockhouse door) once you're out of doors are simple precautions to take.

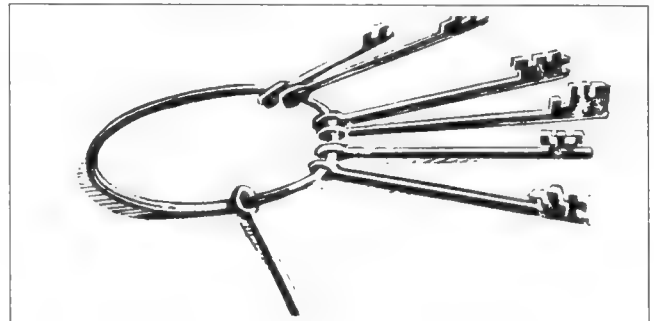
You should now turn to page 33 for the next *action sequence*: SEEKING SHADOWS.

A sturdy pair of bolt cutters would supply the quietest way of breaking the lock. If the PCs have brought this tool, cutting the U-shaped bar of the padlock is an *activity* and may be automatically accomplished.

A hacksaw may be used to saw through the bar of the padlock. This also is an *activity* and may be accomplished automatically, but will be noisy enough to wake the Shirriff.

Hammering the padlock with a club or mace might break its internal mechanism and free the bar. Smashing the lock is a *maneuver*, and has only a chance of success. It will also make noise and wake the Shirriff. Since the lock is relatively old, this has a difficulty rating of *Routine*. It is a *Strength* $\Delta 4$ maneuver.

- If the PCs use a bolt cutter, go to stage 11.
- If they saw through the lock or try to smash it, go to stage 12.



Snick! The cutter passes through the padlock's bar as though it were a sun-ripe peach. You may simply lift the broken lock from the hasp securing the grate to swing the metal door aside and allow Tolman to step out of his cell. The Hobbit is free!

You may wish to conceal any obvious traces of the lockhouse rescue to delay pursuit by the Shirriff. Closing the cell grate behind Tolman, positioning the lock as though it were unbroken, and shutting the _____ (office window or main lockhouse door) once you're out of doors are simple precautions to take.

You should now turn to page 33 for the next *action sequence*: SEEKING SHADOWS.

What a horrendous sound! You hear a floor-board squeaking within the Bunce household and know that you have merely seconds to free Tolman and flee the lockhouse.

- If the PCs are using a backsaw, go to stage 13.
- If the PCs succeed in smashing open the lock, go to stage 13.
- If the PCs fail to smash open the lock, go to stage 14.

The lock gives way as footsteps pound in the Bunce home. You've just enough time for Tolman to slip through the grate and dash for the lockhouse door (or office window) with the rest of you. Your friends standing watch are swept into the wild retreat.

Sprinting across Callow Market, you notice the night sky holds several clouds. As you dive between the houses flanking your escape route, shouts erupt from the lockhouse. Holfast has discovered the empty cell! As the moonlight is extinguished by a passing cloud, darkness descends to cover your flight.

You should now turn to page 33 for the next *action sequence*: SEEKING SHADOWS.

The lock rattles against the grate, but remains intact. Footsteps pound in the Bunce home, and the door separating the lockhouse from the Hobbit-hole swings violently open as Holfast bursts through it. As soon as he sees you, the Shirriff lowers his cudgel.

"I might have known," he grunts between pants. "That high-spirited nephew of mine came along with too little protest for it to be the dawning of wisdom in his stubborn noggin." A reluctant grin turns Holfast's mouth up at the corners, but he forces his lips into a straight line. "So what have you got to say for yourselves? No, don't answer me. I can see you're set on chasing a Troll or some other nasty with Tolman in the lead. Talking wouldn't have paid no toll, but this midnight raid on the lockhouse is the one way you could convince me!" He moves towards the grate and fishes a large key ring from the pocket of his trousers.

"Can't expect to find old heads on young shoulders," comments the Hobbit, face stern, but a twinkle lighting his eye. "There you are. You'd best return with a Troll in tow, or I'm liable to be relieved of my duties permanently, you rascals. Get along with you now, and take care how you go. You were a mite too noisy in here!"

The characters may converse a bit more with the Shirriff, if they wish to do so before they go.

You should now turn to page 33 for the next *action sequence*: SEEKING SHADOWS.



SEEKING SHADOWS

I

Have one of the players trace the route taken by the PCs away from the lockhouse. It will probably duplicate the escape route they planned earlier, while sitting comfortably in the Greenthumb sitting room. However, the group is now actually travelling that route — not merely thinking about it.

Describe the sights, sounds, and scents the PCs encounter along the way. This will vary, depending on how fast they are moving and whether they are sneaking, fleeing precipitately, or walking calmly.

- If the PCs disturbed no one while at the lockhouse and are sneaking away, go to stage 2.
- If the PCs woke the Shirriff, but fled before he caught them, go to stage 3.
- If the PCs woke Holfast Bunce and were caught by him (and let go), go to stage 4.

2

Use the *action sequence* on page 24 of *The Guidelines*, sneaking through town by night, to guide the PCs through Bree to their chosen place of refuge outside the town.

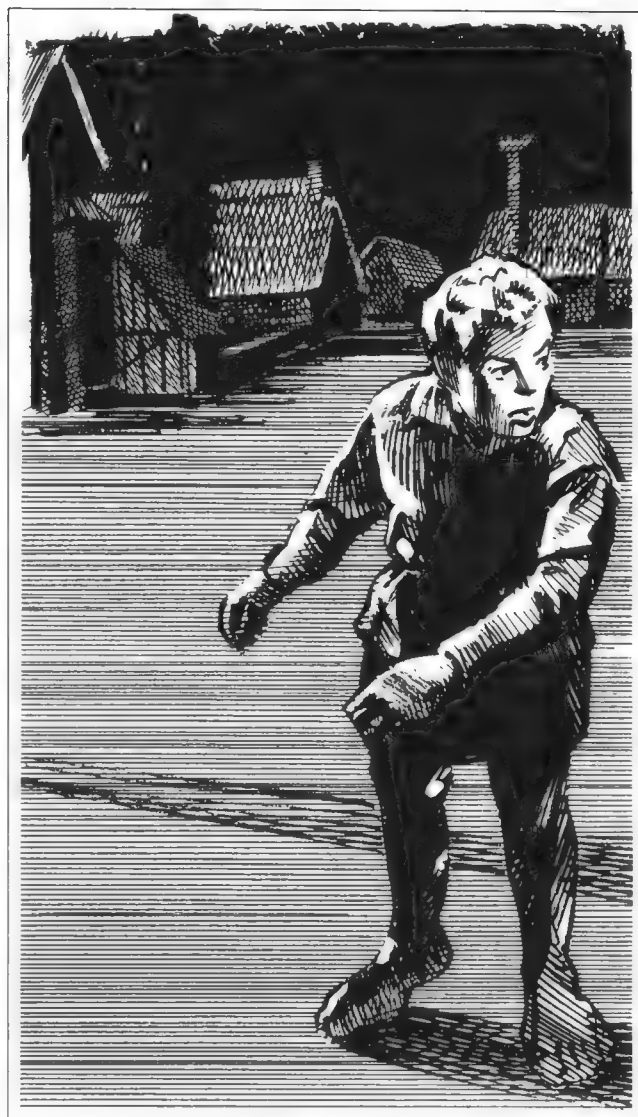
- Then, go to stage 5.

GM NOTE

You have already used the *action sequence* on page 24 of *The Guidelines*, although you may not yet have read the text there! **SNEAKING THROUGH BREE** was a specific version, with all the details provided, of the general sequence of actions described by the *action sequence*.

In stage 2 of **SEEKING SHADOWS**, you will create the details noticed by the group as they move through Bree. Use the maps of Bree and of Bree-land as aids. The terrain depicted on the maps, the buildings shown, and the list of Bree-landers provided on page 61 will enable you to provide detailed descriptions of your own for the players.

Congratulations! You've just reached another milestone in the fun of fantasy role playing and the art of GMing.



3

The houses, the boxwood-edged gardens, the flagstone walks, and the round windows of Hobbit smials stream past in a blur. Miraculously, the thump of your speeding feet attracts the attention of no restless sleeper. Or if you, in fact, have awakened some curious busybody, you've run onward before he or she made it to window or door. At last the fields surround you.

- Go to stage 5.



4

Having encountered Holfast Bunce without any ill effect (other than embarrassment), the PCs have no real need to sneak anymore. The worst any suspicious Bree-lander might do would be to escort the PCs to the Shirriff! As they walk calmly to the prearranged refuge, they have ample opportunity to observe the sleeping town of Bree.

Along the lane near Callow Market the houses lean closely together like sheep huddling for warmth in winter. The top dormer in the squat Scutch house nearly touches the gutter of the tall Dewberry residence. Farther from the square, cottages preside over a small garden patch, their windows eyeing one another across cabbages, carrots, or asparagus.

As you approach the edge of town, the fields grow ever more extensive, until they blend with the farmlands surrounding Bree.

• Go to stage 5.

5

Once the PCs are beyond the town's perimeter, describe the countryside to the players.

The dark mass of the Chetwood looms ahead. It's inky silhouette contrasts sharply with the silvery highlights found in the fields and meadows that lie to either side. As the forest draws closer, individual trees at its edge become visible. The twisted limb of an ancient hickory catches the moonlight like a crone's arm uplifted to cast a wicked spell.

Just before you pass under the hickory's shadow, you glance back. Behind you, a shoulder of Bree-hill hides many of the town's cottages. Yet a few of the outlying farms of Staddle are visible.

As the PCs enter the Chetwood and travel through it to the glade frequented by Rilwen, describe their passage through the forest.

Speckles, splotches, and pools of moonlight dapple the forest floor and pattern the trunks and branches of the trees. Finding a path through the underbrush is tricky, but not impossible. Low-hanging boughs claw at hood or hat, while roots catch the probing toe. Yet, amid much rustling of last year's leaves and crackling of fallen twigs, you make your way to the clearing.

The PCs have now successfully completed the first major task of the adventure: releasing Tolman from the lockhouse. Note down 100 *experience points* for each PC — on the chart you've been periodically updating — under the *Group Challenges* column.

Since the group has now arrived in the clearing in the Chetwood, turn to page 35 for **SCENE 3: THE BRIDGE**.



ho goes there?" Gláin's brows drew together as he peered through the darkness. His hand groped for the battle-axe at his belt. "Name yourselves friend or foe!"

"Friend, indeed, friend! Don't draw your weapon, sir," answered a light, almost laughing voice. "I'm naught but a tired Hobbit, dragging after my learned cousin through bog and briar. I say, Merry, you'll never find it in all this murk."

Gláin relaxed. His beard quivered with the hint of a laugh as he listened to the quarrel pursued by the yet-unseen travellers.

"You may not have much notion of where we are, Pippin, but I spent my time at Thalabas Hall rather better. We are walking south along Crooked Creek through the western fringes of the Chetwood. See how the moonlight catches the glimmer of the water. The Greenway is but twenty paces to our right, and Howland's Knoll should be merely fifty paces ahead." As Merry finished speaking, the pair emerged from the surrounding thicket and bowed to Gláin.

"Meriadoc Brandybuck at your service," said the Hobbit of the scholarly speech.

"And Peregrin Took," added his younger companion.

• SIX •

SCENE 3: THE BRIDGE

This scene is composed of five *sequences*.

"DARK FOR DARK BUSINESS" is a planning session to determine a strategy to overcome the Trolls.

TO THE BRIDGE (getting into position) involves approaching enemy territory: the Troll's bridge.

TAUNTING TROLLS (fleeing an enemy) has the PCs yelling jeers at the Trolls to lure them away from the protective shadows of the bridge.

"BE STONE TO YOU!" (combat) is a fight that should end with sunrise.

GANDALF'S GOODWILL includes the *activity* of treating wounds after combat while listening to advice from Gandalf.

Do continue to note down *experience points* earned by the PCs for *maneuvers* performed, spells cast, and successful blows to their Troll opponents.

"DARK FOR DARK BUSINESS"

Describe the clearing in the Chetwood.

Ferns edge the clearing, filling the shadows where trees overhang the glade with their branches. Short grasses sprinkled with buttercups, cowslip, and foxglove thrive in the open, creating a meadow in miniature. An apple tree occupies one corner of the clearing, and a boulder of the proper size for a seat or a low table rests near it. The moonlight seems very bright after the dimness of the wood.

Before the players become too involved with planning their next move, their characters should be interrupted by the arrival of Peregrin Took and Meriadoc Brandybuck.

These two Hobbits are searching, at Merry's insistence, for a ring of standing stones located on a small hillock called Howland's Knoll. The stones were supposedly placed by Men to be used as a calendar in the days before the ancient, and now long fallen, kingdom of Arnor. Merry's clues to the Knoll's location are based on shadows cast by the full moon at midsummer.

Describe the rustling noises made by the Hobbits as they approach the glade.

Several sticks crack among the trees on the north side of the clearing. Then comes the rustling sound of leaves shuffled aside by someone or something approaching the clearing. What do you do?

The PCs may challenge the approaching intruders or remain silent in the hope of gaining the advantage of surprise. If they challenge the Hobbits, Pippin will explain that he means no one any harm. He and Merry will then continue with the dialogue immediately below. (See also the dialogue on page 35 at the beginning this section.)

If the PCs remain silent, they will hear Pippin and Merry conversing without the explanation of their harmlessness (which should quickly become apparent). Relate the overheard conversation to the players.

A light, almost laughing voice speaks from the forest: "I say, Merry, you'll never find it in all this murk."

Another, more serious speaker answers: "You may not have much notion of where we are, Pippin, but I spent my time at Thalabas Hall rather better. We are walking south along Crooked Creek through the western fringes of the Chetwood. See how the moonlight catches the glimmer of the water over there. The Greenway is but twenty paces to our right, and Howland's Knoll should be merely fifty paces ahead.

Following this exchange, two Hobbits emerge from the forest and bow, both introducing themselves very politely.

Merry and Pippin will be quite open about their errand in the Chetwood. Read the boxed material on below for details.

GM NOTE

Both Hobbits had been visiting relatives in the Marish. While Pippin roamed outdoors with the young folk, Merry secluded himself in the library of Thalabas Hall which contained many excellent books. (According to Merry they were excellent. Pippin stigmatizes them as fusty old dust-catchers written by even older know-it-alls who would bore a mere stranger with long statements about the properties of snuff!)

Merry learned a lot concerning Howland's Knoll during his reading. When Pippin teased him about his scholarly tendencies at dinner, the entire clan of Hornblowers chimed in. To defend his honor, Merry wagered he would find Howland's Knoll before his cousin Marman could find, cook, and eat enough mushrooms to feed all the Hornblowers in the Marish.

Marman set off immediately to pick mushrooms. And Merry, with Pippin to keep him company, set off for Howland's Knoll.

Encourage the players to chat with Pippin and Merry. If the PCs are equally open about their own purposes in the forest, the two Hobbits will give them some wise advice (originating from Bilbo Baggins) about Trolls.

The substance of the advice about Trolls will be:

- 1) Trolls are very big, 8' to 10' tall.
- 2) Trolls are quite vicious and ruthless, especially when hungry.
- 3) Sunlight turns Trolls to stone.
- 4) Trickery works better than fighting, if you want to defeat Trolls.
- 5) Fortunately, Trolls are quite stupid.
- 6) There are two Trolls living under the bridge on the Old North Road. The Hobbits saw the Trolls roasting mutton over a fire beneath the bridge's arch.

Merry and Pippin, like most folks, don't know that there are several varieties of Troll: Forest Trolls, Hill Trolls, and Cave Trolls are a few fairly common types. Fortunately, Lawrie and Wilfred are true Stone Trolls and will turn irrevocably to stone when exposed to sunlight. (Black Trolls, the worst kind, don't mind the sun at all!)

After the PCs have heard the information about the Trolls, they should plan how they will defeat Lawrie and Wilfred. If encouraged to remain, Merry and Pippin will be happy to help with the planning. Otherwise they will wish the PCs the best of good luck and depart.

The plan to defeat the Trolls should revolve around developing methods to keep them out of the bridge's shadow while the sun rises. The Trolls are too strong and fierce to be easily killed in combat.

When they approach the bridge, it is likely that the PCs will find the Trolls at home gulping down sheep flesh. How can the PCs lure the Trolls away from the bridge and keep them there until dawn?

The answer is relatively simple. A volley of either missile weapons or spells (such as Fire Bolt) or insults will bring the Trolls charging out from the bridge so long as the sun is yet below the horizon. If their timing is good, the PCs should be able to distract the Trolls with either hand-to-hand combat or more insults for the minutes required for the sun to rise.

Once the players have arrived at a plan roughly similar to that outlined above, they will need to decide the specifics. A list of the essential elements follows. You may need to prompt the players to consider each item.

Do award *experience points* to PCs whose players voice the concerns below or come up with answers. A suggested number of *EPs* is provided in parentheses. Note them down as appropriate under the *Ideas* column on the chart you've been using throughout the previous sections of the adventure.

- How many minutes before sunrise will the PCs provoke the Trolls? It should be close enough to dawn to minimize the time during which the Trolls must be distracted. Yet, the sky must still be dark. No Stone Troll would venture above ground when the sky was greying. Nine to twelve minutes is probably the optimum. (*Experience Points*: 15)

- From what direction will the PCs approach the bridge? Will they sneak the last hundred yards in order to observe the Trolls briefly before beginning to provoke them? (*Experience Points*: 4)
- Will the PCs use missiles, spells, taunts, or all three to draw the Trolls from their shelter? Do they have enough arrows and sling stones to be effective? Should they gather some pebbles, birds' eggs, sticks, or other debris to supplement their supplies? (*Experience Points*: 4)
- How far will the PCs attempt to draw the Trolls? Will they perhaps pretend to flee, then turn and fight again? Where will they flee? Since the Hobbits cannot run as quickly as the others, who will carry them piggyback? Or will the Hobbits await them at a pre-arranged point where they will engage the Trolls? How will the PCs ensure that the Trolls remain sufficiently enraged during the chase? More insults, perhaps? (*Experience Points*: 12)
- What insults will the PCs yell? They might benefit from making a list of promising epithets. (*Experience Points*: 10)
- Will the PCs provoke the Trolls while standing to the east of the bridge? or on top of the bridge? If the Trolls don't move far, the bridge's shadow might still shelter them from the sun's rays if they are to its west. (*Experience Points*: 8)
- Will the PCs use a "battle formation," a pre-planned arrangement for who will stand in front, who in back, etc.? (*Experience Points*: 7)
- Who will cast spells? Who will shoot arrows or sling stones? Who will throw the birds' eggs? Who will yell the insults? (*Experience Points*: 5)

When the group has finished planning, Merry and Pippin (if they did not leave prior to the planning session) will wish them the best of good luck and depart.

With a plan ready to implement, the group may need to do some preparatory *activities*, such as gathering objects to throw at the Trolls. Allow them to complete these *activities*, and then turn to page 38 for the *action sequence*: **TO THE BRIDGE**.

TO THE BRIDGE

I

One of the players should trace on the map of Bree-land the route across the fields that the group takes to the bridge. Describe the sights, sounds, and scents the PCs encounter along the way.

After another crunching, crackling, rustling passage through the woods, you emerge into the meadowlands. The moon is lower in the sky, and the fields seem dimmer than before. The breeze, excluded from the clearing where you made your plans, is very much present outside the Chetwood and rather cool. It hushes through the grasses in long rippling waves. A flock of sheep huddles on a far hill crest.

Bitter Creek glimmers in the fading light. Its waters skim over the pebbled beach on its south bank then swirl onward to curl in white rills around rocks set midstream. Nicely placed to serve as stepping stones, the rocks will allow you to cross the creek if you wish.

Farther downstream, on the north bank, a willow tree dips sinuous fronds into the gentle current. The leafy wands wave slowly to and fro, marking time as the night draws toward its close.

Beyond the willow, the bridge where the Old North Road crosses Bitter Creek is visible. Distance shrinks its sturdy stones down to the size of pebbles. In the darkness that marks the bridge's arch, there flickers a spark, a small dot of incandescence. The Trolls are still cooking the night's catch of mutton.

How to approach the bridge? Do you simply walk toward it? Or do you sneak?

- If the PCs intend to sneak towards the Trolls' camp under the bridge, go to stage 2.
- If they will approach with less caution, go to stage 3.

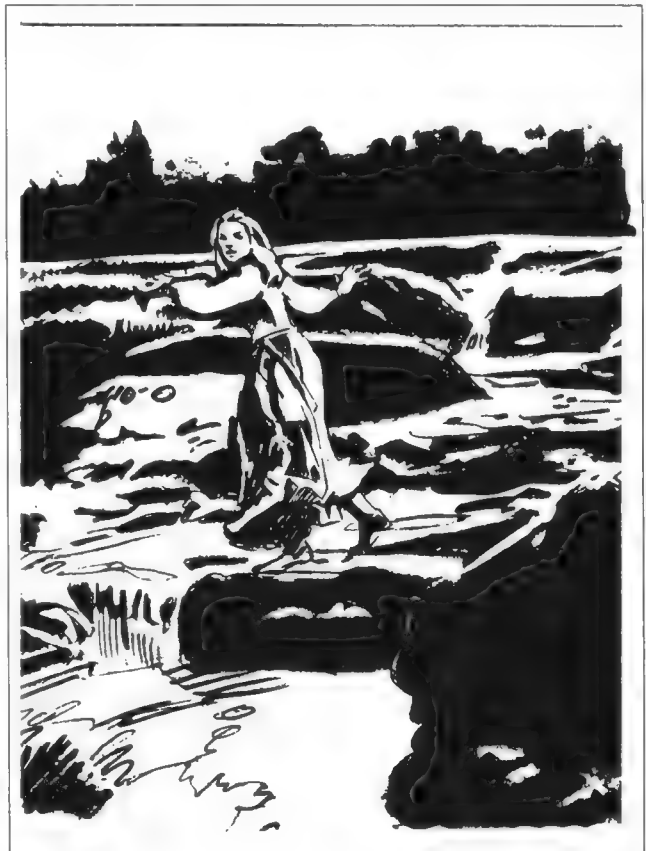
2

The Trolls are so busy quarreling over who got the fattest ewe that they will not notice anything less obvious than someone actually falling flat on his or her face into the circle of light cast by the cooking fire.

However, the players don't have that information. Guide them through their sneaky approach as though everything depended on it! (In other words, have each player make a *Subterfuge* roll for his or her character. If a bad roll is made, the GM should *roll the dice* to see if the Trolls notice the noise — they won't, of course, be alerted to the PCs.)

Determine what the PCs are doing to be sneaky. Have each player roll dice, and use the results to shape your description of how well they succeed. Low numbered results might include falling in the creek with a loud splash (which the Trolls will assume is a fish). High numbered results involve moving with little noise and blending well with the existing shadows.

• Next, go to stage 3.





GM NOTE

Sneaking up on the Trolls involves what we call *fake dice rolls*. These are rolls for actions that the players believe to be essential, but the GM knows to be unimportant. Such rolls help maintain the feeling of danger and adventure that should always be part of challenging unknown odds. Sneaking up on an inattentive enemy is one example of such a situation. The GM will know that the enemy is inattentive, but the players may not.

A roll, made by the player, may determine how well an unessential maneuver is performed by a PC, even though it will not change the course of the adventure.

A second roll, made by the GM, determines the reaction or perceptiveness of the opponent. Even if the GM knows that the opponent is sound asleep or has abandoned his post, he or she should make this roll, since the player does not have this information!

There are many other situations which may call for fake dice rolls — a PC picking the lock on his prison cell only to be caught by the guard around the corner, a PC searching the countryside for a lost sword when the weapon has been appropriated by one of his “friends,” etc. — so be alert to the possibility!

Describe what the PCs experience as they get closer to the bridge and the Trolls.

As the bridge draws nearer, the spark glimmering beneath its arch grows to a coal casting a steady red glow, then a flickering torch shooting flashes of gold, then a cookfire with two hulking shadows seated in its light.

An iron pot the size of a stove or a laundry tub hangs suspended over the fire. Bubbling sounds and delicious smells come from the stew filling the pot.

One of the shadowy figures steps forward to thrust a huge wooden spoon into the simmering mutton. A massive jowl, flattened nose, and jutting brow sprouted with grisly tufts of hair appears suddenly within the silhouette as the flames leap. The Troll shovels a spoonful of stew into his cavernous mouth and smacks his lips.

“I reckon this ‘ere mulligan’s about right, Wilfred. Lemme have yer bowl, and I’ll serve up yer share.” The creature’s voice rumbles like rocks in an avalanche.

“Mind yer serve me up a mite more than you serve yerself, Lawrie. My ewe was a good ten pound heavier than yourn,” states his companion.

“Blimey, Fred! Yer ate two ribs for every one o’ mine out o’ that lamb we gobbled yesterday. You owe me!”

“Do not!” protests Wilfred. “Who snabbed the first ewe? Me! Who snabbed the second? Me! And who ate ‘em roasted? You! Gimme that spoon!” As the infuriated Troll makes a grab for it, Lawrie whacks him over the head, then scoops another spoonful of mutton into his mouth.

“Ow, ow, ow! You booby!” yells Wilfred, who then thumps Lawrie with his empty bowl.

The quarrel looks like it will go on for quite some time.

You should now turn to page 40 for the next *action sequence*: **TAUNTING TROLLS**.

TAUNTING TROLLS

I

Use the map of the bridge over Bitter Creek and stand-up figures to show the position of each Troll and of the PCs.

Describe the continuing quarrel to the players.

Several bumps and bashes later, Wilfred growls, "Awright, awright, have it yer own way! I'm tired o' ewe flesh anyhow, and you would be too if yer was a proper Stone Troll. Manflesh and Dwarf-knuckles are the food for me, and I mean to have them, yer weak-kneed sheep-gut! Tomorrer night I'm hunting in town!"

"A weak-kneed sheep-gut am me? Back in the hills yer'd be callin' me a swell Joe and thankin' me twice fer a morsel o' sweet valley mutton like what this is. But now when yer stomach's full, it's weak-kneed sheep-gut. Yer lily-livered rabbit, I'll pound *you* into a stew, and then we'll see who gets manflesh and Dwarfbones!"

Now is the perfect moment for an insult or a volley of arrows. Both Wilfred and Lawrie are so incensed that they'll charge first and ask questions later. What do you do?

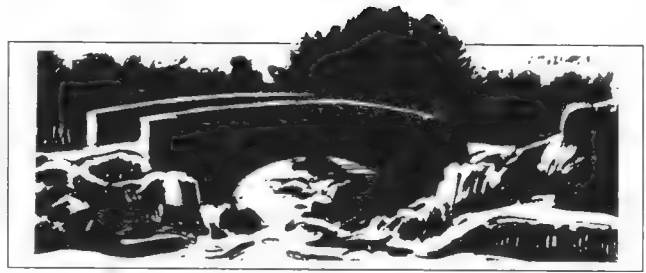
Note the time. How many minutes before dawn? Write the number down, since you will need it later!

- If the PCs cast a spell, fire a missile, or yell an insult, go to stage 2.
- If the PCs move forward to fight the Trolls, go to page 43 for the next action sequence: "BE STONE TO YOU!"

2

Tell each player whose PC casts a spell to roll the dice. If the dice roll plus the PC's Magical skill is 7 or more, the spell is successfully cast.

Read the spell description on page 10 of *The Guidelines* to determine the results of the spell. The player should note down the *Damage Taken* (due to casting a spell) on his or her PC's Character Record.



GM NOTE

You will need to know the Trolls' *stats* in this *action sequence* and the next. They are listed below. Those that will most likely be important in the *action sequences* are in bold type.

Lawrie has a long, wickedly serrated knife that's big enough to be a sword, and delivers the extra +1 to damage when it hits an opponent.

Wilfred uses a massive wooden mallet that acts as a warhammer (+2 to damage, -1 to Melee OB).

Wilfred

Strength	4	Missile OB	0
Agility	-2	General	3
Intelligence	-3	Subterfuge	-1
Movement	3	Perception	-1
Defense	3	Magical	-6
Melee OB	6	Endurance	70

Lawrie

Strength	4	Missile OB	1
Agility	-2	General	3
Intelligence	-3	Subterfuge	-1
Movement	3	Perception	-1
Defense	3	Magical	-6
Melee OB	5	Endurance	65

Note the time. How many minutes remain before dawn? (Unless something has occurred to prevent the PCs from following their plan, it should be exactly what they specified in their planning session in the Chetwood.) Multiply this figure by 6 to obtain the number of rounds that the PCs must keep the Trolls out in the open. If any PCs cast a spell in this stage, note that 1 round has passed.

Perhaps no one casts a spell. That's fine. Just go to the next stage.

- Now, go to stage 3.

Tell each player whose PC throws or fires a missile to specify at which Troll he or she is aiming and to roll the dice.

Subtract the Troll's *Defense Bonus* (DB) from the PC's *Missile OB*.

Using the Combat Table on page 17 of *The Guidelines*, cross-index the dice roll and the difference between the DB and OB.

If the missile is a weapon, the result is the amount of damage taken by the Troll. Make a note of it near his stats.

If the missile is an egg, a stick, a stone, or some other object, it hits the Troll if the result is 1 or more, but does no damage.

Go through the above process as many times as necessary to determine the results of the missiles aimed by each PC. Note that 1 round has passed if any (or all) of the PCs throws or fires a missile. If no one throws or shoots a missile, just continue with the next stage.

• Now, go to stage 4.

Encourage those players whose PCs yell an insult to speak it with some dramatic flair.

For example: "You lily-livered March hare! You're also a hen-hearted cabbage-eater! And you weak-kneed sheep-gut, you're also a craven milksop! You're both a parcel of pluckless mouse-warts!"

The PCs may yell as insults for as long as 6 rounds before the Trolls charge toward them. Each insult will take 1 round.

In the example above, there are five insults. Therefore, 5 rounds would have passed. Note down how ever many rounds pass based on the number of insults that your players hurl.

• Next, go to stage 5.

Both Trolls cease beating on each other (with bowl and spoon, respectively) and launch themselves into the darkness with wordless roars. Lawrie draws a wickedly jagged knife from his boot, while Wilfred scoops up the wooden mallet lying next to the stool on which he was seated mere minutes ago. If you haven't started running yet, you'd better start now!

- If the PCs run, go to stage 6.
- If the PCs stay to fight, go to page 43 for the next the action sequence: "BE STONE TO YOU!"

Ideally the PCs will run for about 10 minutes. Although this is quite reasonable in reality, it would be tedious to play out the 60 rounds of *moving at a run* required by that time frame. We recommend that you use a *maneuver roll* with a variable outcome (rather than the usual *yes/no* outcome) instead.

With the proper use of more insults and jeering, the PCs will be able to keep the Trolls in pursuit for most, but probably not all, of the remaining time. How far they run before the Trolls catch them will depend on a *dice roll* plus the average of the *Movement skills* possessed by the PCs. (The average for all six pre-generated PCs is -1.)

Tell the players to pick one person who will roll the dice to determine how long the chase lasts, before fighting becomes necessary. Use the chart below.

Dice Roll + Skill	Length of Chase
7 or less	43 rounds
8	48 rounds
9-10	53 rounds
11-12	58 rounds
13 or more	63 rounds

Note down the number of rounds that pass.

Don't rely on the numbers alone to convey the terror of two snarling Trolls at one's heels! Describe the chase verbally, using the numerical results as guidelines. Encourage the players to yell more insults throughout the chase.

• Then, go to stage 7.

EXAMPLE

GM: If you haven't started running yet, you'd better start now! The Trolls look ugly!

Gallind's player: We're running! I let Tolman clamber onto my shoulders from the bridge railing, since he can't go as fast. Then I sprint.

Rilwen's player: And I take Lily piggyback.

GM: Good. The average *Movement skill* for the group would be -1 if the Hobbits were running. Even though the extra weight will slow Gallind and Rilwen, the average is +0 with the Hobbits being carried. Which one of you wants to roll the dice to determine how long you are able to run before the Trolls catch up with you?

Gláin's player: Let Lily roll. She's luckier than the rest of us!

All the players: Sounds good!

GM: Okay, Lily, roll the dice.

(Lily's player rolls a 9. Using the chart in stage 6 yields a result of 53 rounds for the chase.)

GM: Excellent. Wilfred stubs his toe on a rock under the bridge as he charges after you, so you start off well ahead of him. But Lawrie is so angry from being hit by Tolman's sling stone that he nearly catches Rilwen as she pauses to pull Lily onto her back.

The Troll bares his fangs and snarls: "Roast Elf and Hobbit pie might sooth me temper, and then again they might not! Better run faster, yer briny-mouthed toadworts!"

Thinking up the speech slows him down, and Rilwen manages to escape. She catches up to Gláin who is also lagging a bit due to his shorter legs, but the Trolls are not far behind.

Their eyes gleam red, and spittle drips from their writhing lips.

As you run, feet pounding and lungs gasping for breath, your eyes begin to adjust to the darkness. Since the campfire is no longer before the Trolls' gaze, they might notice that the sky is greying. Perhaps some more jeers and sneers might be in order.

Tatharína's player: You snail-footed puddingbags, you couldn't catch us even if you rode a Fell Beast in chase! I'll prove it! I'll run circles around you, and you'll just fall over from dizziness, you dimwitted inchworms!"

GM: Both Lawrie and Wilfred roar and speed up. They're angrier than ever, and never notice the light growing in the sky. But they do catch up to you. You'll have to turn and fight unless you want to be mown down from behind!

Tolman's player: Okay. I hop off Gallind's shoulders, and take my sling out of my pocket.

(The other players then describe what their characters are doing to prepare for the fight. The GM calculates how many rounds before dawn are left.

Gallind cast the spell *Fire Bolt* back at the bridge. *That took 1 round.* Tolman used his sling to fire a stone at Lawrie. *That took 1 more round.* Tolman yelled four insults — *another 4 rounds.* And the chase took *53 rounds.* The total number of rounds that have passed is *59.*

Since the group started hassling the Trolls 10 minutes before sunrise, 60 rounds, the PCs need only fight the Trolls for 1 round before the dawn turns them to stone! Good work!)

7

When the Trolls catch up to the PCs, as they eventually will, due to their superior *Movement skills*, how long must the PCs fight?

You'll need to do a bit of simple arithmetic here. Subtract the number of rounds used — by spells, missiles, insults, and the chase — from the number of rounds before dawn (determined in *stage 2*). This is the total number of rounds before dawn *now* remaining. The PCs must fight the Trolls during these remaining rounds.

There is some chance that dawn will turn the Trolls to stone before they catch up with the PCs. If the arithmetic in the paragraph above generated a negative number, then sunrise occurs before the Trolls get close enough to fight the PCs.

(Multiply the number of rounds — used by spells, missiles, insults, and the chase — by 5' to determine how far everyone is from the bridge. Note the information down, since you will need it later!)

- If the Trolls turn to stone during the chase, go to *stage 8*.
- If the PCs must fight the Trolls, go to *page 43* for the next action sequence: "BE STONE TO YOU!"

Describe the sunrise and its effect on the running Trolls to the players.

Your legs feel so heavy that it's hard to take the next running step, and your lungs burn with each breath. Perhaps you should turn to fight just to be able to stop running! The sky is a pale grey, but the sun has yet to appear.

A glance over your shoulder puts new strength into your tiring legs. The Trolls are barreling forward with scowls wrinkling their ugly faces. Lawrie is jabbing the air with his barbed knife, impatient for a foe of flesh and blood — you!

Suddenly the birds in the Chetwood burst into song, and warm rays of sunlight stream across the fields as the sun rises above the treetops of the forest. Lawrie and Fred are caught in mid-stride, turned into statues of running Trolls. Wilfred has his mallet raised for a deadly blow, but it will never fall while the sun and moon yet set in the West.

While the PCs are still puffing from their many minutes of sprinting, Gandalf arrives from the North, riding along the Greenway on a horse.

The clapping of hooves made by a horse moving at a walk draws your attention to the Greenway.

A grey-cloaked rider with a pointed blue hat, a silver scarf nearly concealed by his long white beard, and big black boots sits astride the splendid white steed. The rider's gaze is piercing and his nose hawk-like.

It's Gandalf! Yes, Gandalf: the strange wandering Wizard who gave Old Master Harding a magical trowel that cleaned and polished itself at day's end when stored in the gardening shed. The fabulous storyteller who enlivened parties with tales about the defeat of three-headed Trolls or the trickery of evil Queens. The outrageous fellow who encouraged a Shire Hobbit — the staid Bilbo Baggins, no less — to travel to the east of East where he confronted Smaug the Dragon!

You should now turn to page 48 for the *activity sequence*: GANDALF'S GOODWILL.

"BE STONE TO YOU!"

The PCs will be using the *combat actions* described on pages 15-16 of *The Guidelines* when they fight the Trolls. Do use the stand-up figures and a map or hexagonal grid to show where the PCs are standing in relation to the Trolls. Remember that if a PC acts during the first *combat action* of a round, he or she cannot then act in later *combat actions*, but must wait until the next round.

Remember also to note down any *EPs* earned through spells cast, damage delivered to the Trolls by skillful weapon use, and successful *maneuvers*.

The first *combat action* in a round is always *spell casting*. Tell each player whose PC casts a spell to *roll the dice*. If the *dice roll* plus the PC's *Magical bonus* is 7 or more, the spell is successfully cast.

Read the spell description on page 10 of *The Guidelines* to determine the results of the spell. The player should note down the *Damage Taken* (due to casting a spell) on his or her PC's Character Record.

Use this process for each PC casting a spell.

The Trolls do not have any spell casting abilities. If they did, you would need to *roll dice* for their spells and describe the effects noticed by the PCs.

• Now, go to stage 2.

The second *combat action* in a round is *making missile attacks*. Tell each player whose PC throws or fires a missile to specify at which Troll he or she is aiming and to *roll the dice*.

Subtract the Troll's *Defense bonus* (DB) from the PC's *Missile OB*.

Using the Combat Table on page 17 of *The Guidelines*, cross-index the dice roll and the difference between the DB and OB.

The result is the amount of damage taken by the Troll. Several PCs may all fire on one Troll at once. Just keep track of the *Damage Taken* by the Troll.

Go through the process of making a missile attack for each PC who is doing so.

The Trolls do not have missile weapons. If they did, you would need to determine any damage done by their missile attacks to the PCs.

• Now, go to stage 3.

3

The third *combat action* in a round is *making melee attacks*.

Compare the *Agility stats* of all the PCs *making melee attacks* and both Trolls. Whoever has the highest *Agility* will attack first. (If the *Agility skills* are the same, the attacks are simultaneous.) The attacker must be within 5 feet of the individual he or she intends to attack.

Subtract the defender's *Defensive bonus* (DB) from the attacker's *Melee OB*. Roll the dice for the attacker.

Using the Combat Table, cross-index the dice roll and the difference between the DB and OB.

The result is the amount of *Damage Taken* by the defender.

Compare the *Agility stats* of the remaining combatants — those who have not yet attacked. Again, whoever has the highest *Agility* will attack next. Guide him or her through the process for making a melee attack.

- When both Trolls and those PCs planning on making a melee attack have done so, go to stage 4.

4

The fourth *combat action* is *moving at a run*. Is any PC running away? If so, he or she is *moving at a run*.

Have both Trolls arrived at the spot where the PCs have stopped to fight? If not, the slower Troll may still be lumbering to leap into the fray, or *moving at a run*.

Compare the *Agility stats* of the runners. The one with the highest stat will start running first.

Each running individual should *roll the dice* and add his or her *Movement bonus*.

If the result is less than 6, the runner stumbles and moves only 10 feet in the first 10 seconds (the first round).

If the result is 6 or more, the runner moves a distance of the result multiplied by 10' in the first round.

Determine how far everyone running goes and move their figures on the map accordingly. (Sometimes, in a particular round, no one will be *moving at a run*.)

- Then, go to stage 5.

5

The fifth *combat action* is *moving and quick attacking*.

Compare the *Agility stats* of those who will *move and quick attack*. The one with the highest stat will do so first.

Multiply the attacker's *Movement bonus* by 10' and add 25' to it. This is how far the attacker may move. Move his or her counter on the display accordingly.

Halve the attacker's *Melee OB* (round up).

Subtract the defender's *Defense bonus* (DB) from this halved *Melee OB*.

Using the Combat Table, cross-index the dice roll and the difference between the DB and OB.

The result is the amount of damage taken by the defender.

Go through this process for each individual *moving and quick attacking* in order of their *Agility stats*, from highest to lowest.

- Then, go to stage 6.

6

The sixth *combat action* is *moving at a walk*.

The fastest walker (with the highest *Agility stat*) will go first.

Multiply the walker's *Movement bonus* by 10' and add 50' to it. This is how far the walker may move. Move his or her figure on the display accordingly.

- Then, go to stage 7.

7

The seventh *combat action* is *performing a maneuver*.

The quickest person (again with the highest *Agility*) will start his or her *maneuver* first.

Determine whether the action to be taken by the PC is really one *maneuver* or a series of *maneuvers*. Leaping a ditch is one *maneuver*. Pulling on the bronze chain hanging from Lawrie's pocket (a key chain?) is probably two *maneuvers*: one to sneak behind the Troll while he concentrates on bashing Gláin and another to pull the chain from Lawrie's pocket. Thus, the sneaking might be attempted in this round, but the theft would have to wait until the next round.

Assign a difficulty rating to the *maneuver* and determine what stat is applicable.

Obtain a dice roll for the *maneuver* and add or subtract the applicable bonuses or penalties.

Compare the result with the difficulty rating. If the result is equal to or greater than the difficulty rating, the *maneuver* succeeds. Otherwise, it fails.

Based on the success or failure of the *maneuver*, describe what happens.

- *Then, go to stage 8.*

8

Stages I through 7 describe all of the seven *combat actions* in a round. Often, only two or three of the *combat actions* will be used in a particular round.

The PCs will be fighting the Trolls for several rounds. How many? That depends on how close to dawn it was when they first provoked the Trolls and how long they ran before turning to fight. Use the figures you generated in *stage 7* (or *stage 2*, if the PCs did not run) of TAUNTING TROLLS.

The Trolls are tough opponents. However, they are more interested in obtaining manflesh, Dwarf-flesh, and Hobbit-flesh for a toothsome snack than in defending themselves. They don't fear the PCs or respect them as opponents. Therefore, the Trolls are attempting merely to subdue the characters or knock them unconscious. Any **K** results obtained on a PC in this fight should be converted to **U** results.

Go through stages I to 7 as many times as there are rounds before the sun comes up.

- *If the Trolls win the fight — that is, all the PCs are unconscious — before the sun rises, go to stage 11.*
- *If the PCs win the fight — that is, at least one PC is still awake and fighting when the sun rises, go to stage 9.*

9

The description below may need to be modified if Wilfred is no longer fighting, or if both Trolls are dead or unconscious.

From inky black to soot grey to a thundercloud's ominous hue to the pale sheen of a dove's wing, the sky has been slowly lightening throughout your struggle with the Trolls.

Lawrie and Wilfred, nearly blind with rage and intent on making you into breakfast, never noticed the change.

Now, suddenly, the sky in the East turns lemon yellow. The edge of the sun, a fiery arc that hurts the eyes, peeks above the Chetwood.

Caught in mid-swing, weapon arm poised to deliver a fearsome blow, Wilfred (or Lawrie) stiffens. His flesh has turned to stone.

Lawrie (or Wilfred), too, is a statue.

Dawn has come, and the Trolls will never eat mutton again.

- *Go to stage 10.*

10

As the sun rises higher, dispelling the night's concealing cloak of shadows, your bruises, cuts, and scrapes are only too obvious. Tussling with Trolls is no picnic, and your aching muscles bear eloquent witness to that fact.

The PCs will probably need to spend some time treating their wounds. Tatharina may cast the spell *Healing* or use some of the medicinal herbs she carries in her pouch. While the PCs are occupied with this, Gandalf arrives from the North, riding along the Greenway on a horse.

The clapping of hooves made by a horse moving at a walk interrupts your attentions to your friends' wounds.

A grey-cloaked rider with a pointed blue hat, a silver scarf nearly concealed by his long white beard, and big black boots sits astride the splendid white steed. The rider's gaze is piercing and his nose hawk-like.

It's Gandalf! Yes, Gandalf: the strange wandering Wizard who gave Old Master Harding a magical trowel that cleaned and polished itself at day's end when stored in the gardening shed. The fabulous storyteller who enlivened parties with tales about the defeat of three-headed Trolls or the trickery of evil Queens. The outrageous fellow who encouraged a Shire Hobbit — the staid Bilbo Baggins, no less — to travel to the east of East where he confronted Smaug the Dragon!

Turn to page 48 for: GANDALF'S GOODWILL.

Although the Trolls have won the fight, they may not escape with their lives! How far from the bridge were they and how much time was left before the sun rises?

If the fight took place under the bridge, the Trolls are safe in its shadows along with six captives!

If the fight took place within 100' of the bridge and there were 6 or more rounds left at victory time before the dawn, then the Trolls dragged their captives and themselves to shelter without getting turned to stone.

If the fight took place more than 100' from the bridge and there were 10 or more rounds left before the dawn at victory time, the Trolls are also safe with their captives.

If the fight took place more than 200' from the bridge and there were 20 or more rounds left before the dawn at victory time, the Trolls reached safety with their captives in time.

Otherwise, the sun catches the Trolls above ground and turns them to stone.

The chart below summarizes this information.

<i>Distance From Bridge</i>	<i>Rounds Before Dawn</i>	<i>Trolls' Safe Under Bridge?</i>
under bridge	any number	yes
less than 100'	6 or more	yes
less than 100'	5 or less	no
101' to 199'	10 or more	yes
101' to 199'	9 or less	no
more than 200'	10 or more	yes
more than 200'	9 or less	no

- If the Trolls are turned to stone by the sun, go to stage 12.
- If the Trolls are safe under their bridge, go to stage 13.

Bird song and the morning sun awaken you some time later. The silhouette of a Troll stands unmoving nearby. Plainly the Trolls were caught by the dawn as they tried to drag their unconscious captives — you! — back to the bridge for breakfast.

- Go to stage 10.

In the few minutes before dawn, as the Trolls drag their captives toward the bridge, Gandalf arrives. Sizing the situation up quickly, the Wizard performs a solo rescue operation.

Lawrie and Wilfred each deposit a captive under the bridge, then depart together to get those remaining. Gandalf then drags one captive away.

The Trolls return with two more captives, and Gandalf removes another.

Then the Trolls return with the final two PCs and sit down to discuss cooking methods, never noticing that they're missing a pair of their vanquished foes.

Gandalf uses ventriloquism to urge them out into the open again. Of course, the PCs are unconscious and miss most of the action. As they rise toward wakefulness, they might hear the following dialogue.

Gruff voices rumble in your ears and darkness pulses behind your closed eyes. Your limbs feel heavy, as though they belonged to someone else, and your breath barely moves your ribs. Your eyes refuse to open, even with panic coursing through your nerves.

"Let's chop 'em coarse and stew 'em long," growls Wilfred.

"That'll do fer the the big 'uns, but it's pie fer the little 'uns fer me! insists Lawrie. "Hobbit pie and roasted Dwarf-shanks! Blimey, I'm hungry!"

"Where's that last one with the furry toes? He'll make a nice, tender mouthful!" says a voice. Lawrie thinks it's Wilfred speaking, but it isn't.

"I just drug 'im in, you booby!"

"Stop talkin' to yerself! Where is 'e then?"

A three-legged stool creaks. "Gorn! I put 'im down by those jelly jars."

"Well, 'e ain't by 'em now! Yer a fat fool, Lawrie! Yer never drug 'im in, but left the plump-est morsel lyin' in the field."

"Yer fatter yerself, Fred, and a liar, too! Bet yer stowed the rabbit away where yer can eat 'im on the sly."

"I never did!" protests Wilfred. "Yer a jugbitten pipsqueak that can't remember to eat even if yer brother gets yer a square meal. Yer comin' with me to fetch the furry-foot in."



Amidst more creaking from their overburdened stools, Lawrie's voice booms. "I'm comin' awright, and yer gonna look mighty foolish when all yer see is meadow grass and sheep!"

The Trolls depart, not to return. The sun catches them during their search for Tolman and turns them to stone.

Meanwhile, Gandalf binds up the worst wounds of the captives and casts *Healing* as necessary. Describe the Wizard to the player whose PC first regains consciousness.

Without really knowing when your eyes opened, you suddenly notice the large stones of the Troll bridge coming into focus. Sunlight gives the grey rock a warm tinge and plays on the water of Bitter Creek.

A face with a beaky nose and dark piercing eyes swims before your vision. His tall pointed blue hat reminds you of the noontide sky in summer, while his waist-long beard is white as a swan's wings.

"That should do," he says. "With a bit more rest, you'll be fit as a fiddle." The old man's voice is deep and commanding. His grey cloak rustles as he moves away to tend one of your friends.

Who is this stranger who has rescued you from the Troll's stew pot?

It's Gandalf! Yes, Gandalf: the strange wandering Wizard who gave Old Master Harding a magical trowel that cleaned and polished itself at day's end when stored in the gardening shed. The fabulous storyteller who enlivens parties with tales about the defeat of three-headed Trolls or the trickery of evil Queens. The outrageous fellow who encouraged a Shire Hobbit — the staid Bilbo Baggins, no less — to travel to the east of East where he confronted Smaug the Dragon!

Gandalf finishes healing the damage done to the party by the Trolls. He uses a combination of spells and herbs as necessary.

Turn now to page 48 for the next *sequence*:
GANDALF'S GOODWILL.

GANDALF'S GOODWILL

As the PCs continue to recuperate, Gandalf has some words of wisdom to address to the group.

"Well, you did land in a pretty kettle of fish, didn't you? You're fortunate that Lârunag and Wûlafûrad were true Stone Trolls rather than the Olog-hai who go fearless of the sun or the Pertereg who march at the Dark Lord's orders! You did well, nonetheless. I should be praising your valor rather than scolding your rashness."

Encourage the PCs to converse with Gandalf. He knows a surprising amount about their lives, in spite of the fact that they know him by reputation only.

If the PCs still have any untreated wounds, Gandalf will heal them using spells or medicinal herbs as appropriate. If Tatharína has already done this, the Wizard will give her some herbs to replenish her store:

- 5 seeds of Arrowweed (each seed heals 1-3 hits)
- 3 barnacles Seathorn (each barnacle heals 1-6 hits)
- 2 petals Foxrose (each petal heals 2-12 hits)
- 2 Gemberries (each berry heals 10 hits)
- and for each *Healing* spell cast, 1 leaf Wolfwort (one leaf heals 1 hit)

GM NOTE

It's important to reward players for good decisions. Healing wounds promptly after a fight is a wise policy, because the PCs can never be sure that another enemy is not waiting in the wings somewhere to trounce them!

If Tatharína uses up her spell points and herbs after the PCs tussle with the Trolls, she is acting in the PCs' best interests. Yet Gandalf, when he arrives, is willing to heal all the wounds at no cost to the PCs, effectively penalizing Tatharína for her good decision. By replenishing Tatharína's herb supply, the GM ensures that she is rewarded and not punished.

Both you and your players will have the most fun, if you use the general policy of rewarding players for good decisions.



When everyone is healed of his or her wounds, the Wizard prods them to get moving.

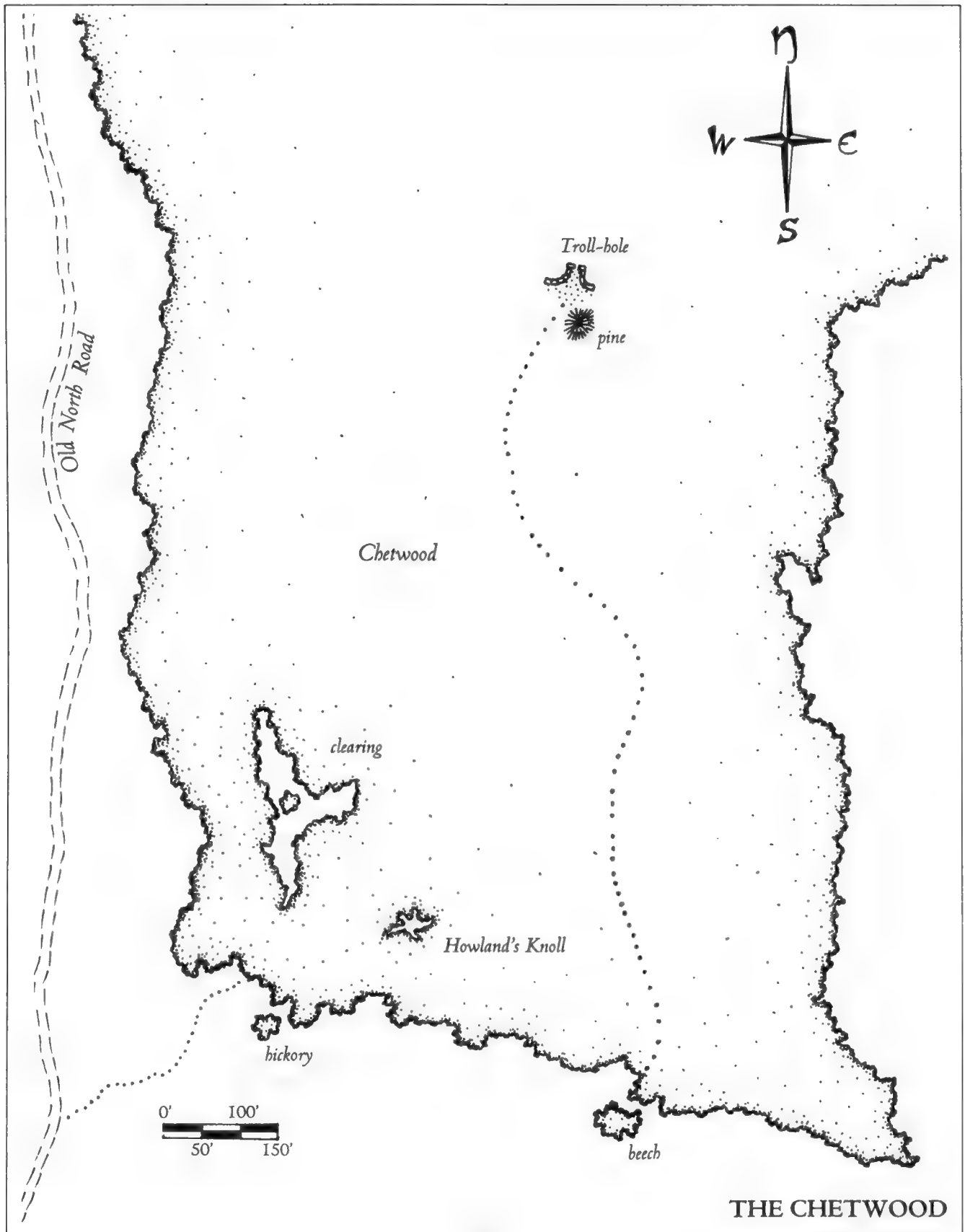
"You're wasting time, my friends! The Trolls spent only the last three nights beneath the bridge. They must have a cave or a hole in the Chetwood where they resided year round. I suggest you look for it and claim any plunder there as recompense for your trouble.

"I saw Troll tracks in the lea of that large Beech at the edge of the Chetwood there." Gandalf raises his arm and points. "Follow them into the forest and you'll be sure to find something! I would go with you, but urgent matters call me elsewhere, and my own blade, Glamdring, is a good one. Good-bye!"

The Wizard mounts his horse and rides away to the south. His voice comes back on the breeze: "Be on the watch for Gil Mossgrave, and don't believe everything Nat Groathusk has to say. Good-bye!"

The PCs have now successfully completed the second major task of the adventure: defeating the Trolls Lawrie and Wilfred. Note down 150 *experience points* for each PC — on the chart you've been periodically updating — under the *Group Challenges* column.

You should now turn to page 50 for **SCENE FOUR: THE TROLL-HOLE**.





olman knelt swiftly on the flagstone floor and scrutinized the lock on the chest. Fine scrollwork framed the keyhole and the engraving of a crescent moon. Clearly the chest was not Troll-make. The craftsmanship was much too nice. Perhaps it had once held blankets in a Northman long-house.

The Hobbit turned to face his friends. "It's trapped alright! See the trio of stars in this engraving? When I try to pick the lock, a spray of darts will erupt from the holes concealed in the star points."

"Wicked," commented Gláin in an unconcerned voice. "I daresay you'll know how to deal with a mere spray of darts, Tom, but I'm willing to help."

"No, no, that shouldn't be necessary," insisted Tolman. "What I *do* need is plenty of room. In fact, I'd prefer that everybody leave the room. If I can't jimmy the trap mechanism, at least I'll be the only casualty."

Rilwen started to protest, but fell silent as Lily shook her head. "As Tolman's sister, I've learned it's a mistake to try and wrap him in cotton wool!" The Hobbit-maid smiled, and her eyes twinkled. "He'll be far more careful if you don't beg him to take care!"

Rilwen nodded and drew Gallind with her through the door. Tolman was already laying out the tools he would need, busy pondering the correct sequence by which the chest might be opened and the treasure within revealed.

• SEVEN •

SCENE 4: THE TROLL-HOLE

Scene Four is composed of three *sequences*.

AN UNEXPECTED BRAWL (combat) brings Gil Mossgrave and Nat Groathusk to fight the PCs, and then to disgorge vital information under questioning.

TROLL-PLUNDER involves the PCs in searching the Troll-hole and claiming the treasure there.

"ALL'S WELL AS ENDS BETTER!" returns the PCs to town, where they tell the good news and then celebrate the end of the Troll menace.

Remember to note down *experience points* earned by the PCs as they fight Nat and Gil, make *maneuvers*, and cast spells and in these *sequences*.

AN UNEXPECTED BRAWL



The PCs should need no urging to seek the Troll tracks described by Gandalf. The lure of treasure is usually strong!

Use the map of the Chetwood and one of the hill where the Troll-hole is located to help the PCs visualize their surroundings.

When they arrive at the beech tree (specified by the Wizard), a narrow trace — not worn enough to be called a path, but more lasting than mere footprints — is readily seen. It leads north into the Chetwood. Describe what the PCs see at the edge of the forest and what they experience as they follow the trace.

GM NOTE

You will need to know Nat's and Gil's stats in this *action sequence*. They are listed below. The most important appear in bold type.

Gil Mossgrave

Strength	1	Missile OB	0
Agility	1	General	2
Intelligence	0	Subterfuge	3
Movement	1	Perception	2
Defense	1	Magical	-4
Melee OB	4	Endurance	40

Each rogue has three daggers balanced for throwing (+0 Melee OB and -1 to damage) and a stout club (+0 to damage).

Nat Groathusk

Strength	1	Missile OB	1
Agility	1	General	2
Intelligence	0	Subterfuge	3
Movement	1	Perception	3
Defense	1	Magical	-4
Melee OB	3	Endurance	40

Behind a queenly beech tree, a narrow thread of bare earth leads through a patch of periwinkle at the edge of the Chetwood. The trace heads north, travelling fairly directly with few bends in its course. Through majestic stands of white oak, sunny glades of brambleberry, and hushed groves of hemlock it passes.

After a nearly one quarter hour of steady marching, you ascend a gentle hill with a lone fir tree on its southern slope. A deep cutting into the hillside is partially concealed by the sweeping branches of the fir. Massive stones line the steep sides of the cutting, which ends in a doorway. This must be the Trolls' hide-out!

But someone else has found the spot before you! Nat Groathusk and Gil Mossgrave emerge from the Troll-hole almost as soon as you set eyes on the iron-bound door, unlocked and swinging on its hinges.

"It's that little worm, Tolman, and his friends," hisses Nat. "I told you he'd make trouble!"

Gil hefts the cudgel in his left hand. "Not for long, he won't! We'll beat him senseless, and then see how the Trolls trouble *him*! And his friends better not interfere!"

The two rogues charge forward, both brandishing their crude clubs. You'll have just enough time to draw your weapons before they're upon you!

- Go to stage 2.

2

You may wish to use the map of the hill in the Chetwood and stand-up figures during the fight between the PCs and Nat and Gil.

Initially, Nat and Gil intend only to give Tolman a good beating. When his friends join the fight and prove to be rather stouter foes than the two rogues expected, they begin to fight in earnest.

However, neither rogue is a proven Warrior. Both will surrender as soon as one of them takes 20 points of damage, is knocked unconscious, succumbs to a *Calm* spell, or is killed. Be sure to end the combat round immediately (stop all further attacks) when one of these conditions occurs.

Use the *action sequence* on page 25 of *The Guidelines*, combat, to determine the course of the conflict.

- If and when either Nat or Gil receives 20 points of damage, go to stage 3.
- If and when either Nat or Gil succumbs to the effects of a *Calm* spell, go to stage 4.
- If and when one rogue is knocked unconscious, go to stage 5.
- If and when one rogue is killed, go to stage 6.
- Otherwise, go to stage 8.

GM NOTE

You have already used the *action sequence* describing combat, whether you've read the text there or not! "BE STONE TO YOU!" was a specific version (modified to include the peculiarities of fighting Lawrie and Wilfred) of the general sequence of actions occurring in combat.

The general *action sequence* can be used anytime the PCs get into a fight!

Nat drops his club and shrinks back toward the Troll-hole. The sneer is gone from his mouth — in fact, his lower lip is wobbling dangerously, as though tears are imminent. “I give up!” he whines.

Gil, too, has dropped his club, but his eyes still hold a disturbing flatness. “You’ve won, this time,” he snarls. “But my friends in the countryside will make mincemeat of you in your beds! Sneaking up through the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, Inledair the Blackhearted will snatch you in the night to tickle your toes with his knife and laugh!” Gil snickers, while holding out his wrists for binding.

Really, you’d better tie these rascals up, and find out who this Inledair is, and why he’ll be troubling Bree-landers!

Roping the wrists and ankles of the bandits is an activity, and the PCs may accomplish it automatically. Encourage them to do so!

- Then, go to stage 7.

If Nat is *Calm*ed:

Suddenly the sneer disappears from Nat’s mouth to be replaced by a silly smile. All aggression damped by the *Calm* spell, the rogue dangles his cudgel like a damp bath towel.

As long as you don’t hurt him, you should be able to bind the scoundrel hand and foot with little trouble.

Gil has dropped his club, but his eyes still hold a disturbing flatness. “You’ve won, this time,” he snarls. “But my friends in the countryside will make mincemeat of you in your beds! Sneaking up through the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, Inledair the Blackhearted will snatch you in the night to tickle your toes with his knife and laugh!” Gil snickers, while holding out his wrists for binding.

Really, you’d better tie this pair up, and find out who this Inledair is, and why he’ll be troubling Bree-landers!

If Gil is *Calm*ed:

Suddenly the blank flatness in Gil’s eyes is replaced by a misty, dreaminess. All aggression damped by the *Calm* spell, the rogue dangles his cudgel like a damp bath towel.

As long as you don’t hurt him, you should be able to bind the scoundrel hand and foot with little trouble.

Nat drops his club and shrinks back toward the Troll-hole. The sneer is gone from his mouth — in fact, his lower lip is wobbling dangerously, as though tears are imminent. “I give up!” he whines. “But you’ll be sorry. Inledair will get you for this. Inledair the Blackhearted! Creeping out of the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, he’ll come. Murder the lot of you in your beds!”

Really, you’d better tie these rascals up, and find out who this Inledair is, and why he’ll be troubling Bree-land!

Roping the wrists and ankles of the bandits is an activity, and the PCs may accomplish it automatically. Encourage them to do so!

- Then, go to stage 7.

If Gil is knocked unconscious:

As Gil slumps to ground unconscious, Nat drops his club and shrinks back toward the Troll-hole. The sneer is gone from his mouth — in fact, his lower lip is wobbling dangerously, as though tears are imminent. “I give up!” he whines.

Hands dangling limply, he holds out his wrists for binding. “Inledair will get you for this. Inledair the Blackhearted! Creeping out of the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, he’ll come. Murder the lot of you in your beds!”

Really, you’d better tie these rascals up, and find out who this Inledair is, and why he’ll be troubling Bree-land!

If Nat is unconscious:

Nat crumples to the ground like a scarecrow.

Gil drops his club, but his eyes still hold a disturbing flatness. "You've won, this time," he snarls. "But my friends in the countryside will make mincemeat of you in your beds! Sneaking up through the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, Inledair the Blackhearted will snatch you in the night to tickle your toes with his knife and laugh!" Gil snickers, while holding out his wrists for binding.

Really, you'd better tie these rascals up, and find out who this Inledair is, and why he'll be troubling Bree-landers!

Roping the wrists and ankles of the bandits is an *activity*, and the PCs may accomplish it automatically. Encourage them to do so!

Also urge them to splash some water on Nat's or Gil's face to bring him back to consciousness. Two rogues available for questioning may yield more information than merely one.

• *Then, go to stage 7.*

6

Since none of the PCs has ever killed a man before, the death of Nat or Gil should be a shock to them. Encourage the players not to gloss over the event, and to role play their characters' reactions to it.

If Nat is dead:

Nat crumples to the ground like a dropped puppet. His body looks strangely heavy and pale, like bread dough made with lifeless yeast.

Gil drops his club, but his eyes still hold a disturbing flatness. "Oh, you've killed him, alright," he snarls. "But watch your backs. My friends in the countryside will make mincemeat of you! Sneaking up through the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, Inledair the Blackhearted and his band will snatch you in the night to tickle your tongues with knives and laugh!" Gil scowls, while holding out his wrists for binding.

You'd better tie the rascal up; letting him go make further mischief won't bring Nat Groathusk back to life.

If Gil is dead:

Gil slumps to ground like a sack of potatoes. His limbs look strangely heavy and pale, like bread dough made with lifeless yeast.

Nat drops his club and shrinks back toward the Troll-hole. The sneer is gone from his mouth — in fact, his lower lip is wobbling dangerously, as though tears are imminent. "Don't kill me, too! I give up!" he whines.

Hands dangling limply, he holds out his wrists for binding. "Inledair will get you for this. Inledair the Blackhearted! Gil was one of his favorites, and the Bandit-king won't take his death easy. Creeping out of the southeastern downs past Storch Hill, he'll come. Murder the lot of you in your beds!"

You'd better tie the rascal up; letting him go make further mischief won't bring Gil Mossgrave back to life.

Roping the wrists and ankles of the remaining scoundrel is an *activity*, and the PCs may accomplish it automatically. Encourage them to do so!

Also urge them to make sure that the fallen man is really dead. Checking the body should give them the opportunity to role play their characters' reactions to the death. Support their responses, and then move them forward to the next task: questioning the survivor.

Now that you've checked the dead man yourselves and know there's no helping him, you have some questions to ask. Who is this Inledair? And why will he be troubling Bree-land?

• *Go to stage 7.*

The words regarding Inledair the Blackhearted and his band — “friends” of Nat and Gil — should motivate the PCs to question the pair for more information. They will learn the following:

- Nat and Gil are working with some bandits who attack travellers on the Great East Road.
- The pair notifies the highwaymen of particularly rich victims who will be passing their way.
- Nat and Gil also sell some of the stolen goods obtained by the bandits in return for a small commission.
- They supply the bandits with goods from town to fill any gaps in their stolen acquisitions.
- Every two weeks, the pair goes to Storch Hill, the appointed meeting place, to accomplish the actions noted above.
- They think the bandits have a larger headquarters somewhere southeast of Storch Hill.
- The most recent instruction was for Nat and Gil to preserve the Troll menace for as long as possible (the more the Bree-landers were preoccupied with Trolls, the less attention they could give to reports of missing caravans, etc.) and to move the Trolls closer to town.
- The judicious placement of fireworks in the Troll-hole by Gil resulted in the Trolls’ removal to the bridge; once there, the Trolls liked the change.

Of course, Nat and Gil aren’t telling everything. They insist that they do not know the location of the bandit lair, but they are lying. It’s in the Trollshaws, a two weeks’ journey east. Nor will they admit that they have actually been there.

Once the PCs have extracted all that Nat and Gil have to say, the two rogues will merely repeat themselves. Encourage the PCs to bring the interview to a close.

The PCs have now successfully completed the last major task of the adventure: confronting Nat and Gil, and extracting information about Inledair the Blackhearted. Note down 125 *experience points* for each PC — on the chart you’ve been periodically updating — under the *Group Challenges* column.

The lure of treasure should now motivate the PCs to do a thorough search of the Troll-hole.

Turn to page 56 for: **TROLL-PLUNDER.**

If the PCs are losing the fight, they may wish to surrender. The result, whether they surrender or are overpowered, will be the same. The bandits tie them up and return to rooting around in the Troll-hole.

The only difference is the amount of damage suffered by the PCs. If they were overpowered, some may be dead, others unconscious, and those conscious possess many bruises.

If any PCs ran toward town to summon help, they may return with the Shirriffs, but not for a considerable time. The group will be reunited in “ALL’S WELL AS ENDS BETTER!”

If any PCs are dead, encourage the players to role play their characters’ reactions. Depending on the circumstances, you may need to comfort your sobbing seven-year-old son or to encourage your tear-phobic 13-year-old niece to express a little upset about her character’s untimely death. Perhaps your spouse’s reserved professor friend might be urged to break his white-lipped silence and yell a bit.

Most players get quite attached to their characters, and a little crying or yelling helps ease the loss.

• Now, go to stage 9.

Describe the process of being roped at the wrists and ankles by Nat and Gil.

Nat and Gil are not gentle as they wind ropes around your wrists and ankles, securing quick knots. The cord is rough and abrades your skin.

When they’ve tied all of you, even those not conscious, the rogues walk back to the door of the Troll-hole. Gil glances suspiciously over his shoulder before following Nat inside.

• Now, go to stage 10.

Describe the experience of sitting in the woods while roped together.

The sun is high in the sky, and its warm, golden light sifts down through the leaves like crystallized honey.

GM NOTE

The death of a player character provides a GM with one of the most challenging situations that occur in fantasy role playing. The personality created by a player is gone, extinguished forever. Sooner or later, it will happen to you — so let's take a few minutes to think about it a bit more.

Suppose the noble Ranger Galfaroth stands on the edge of a pit. In the dim light of the castle's bowels, he scrutinizes the far side. Utter blackness stands between him and safety. No glimmer of light reaches the bottom — if there is one!

Galfaroth hears the scaly rasp of the Dragon behind him. He indulges in a brief vision of himself standing victor over the beast's smoking carcass, then snorts. He has no Black Arrow as Bard of Lake-town did in the stories of his fight against Smaug.

The Ranger takes several steps back from the edge of the pit, turns, and starts running. One, two, three, four, five swift steps, and then he's hurtling through the air. The far side draws near, then rises out of sight as he falls. The darkness swallows him, and he is gone . . .

Uh, oh! What now? The GM thumbs through *The Guidelines* desperately. What to do?

This is the imagination, and no event has to happen if the GM doesn't want it to. Remember that the player characters are the heroes and heroines. As the GM, you have the powerful tool sometimes called "artistic license." If something happens that seems unfair or unreasonable or

otherwise disrupts the flow of the game — get rid of it! But do it in a way that's believable.

So Galfaroth missed the jump. As the far side rises above his head, his arms stretch forward and his fingers grip the crumbling edge. He hangs precariously for a second, then falls again . . . to land on a narrow ledge 7 feet down! Let the Ranger rest for a few seconds, then climb upwards to continue his escape. The Dragon is still coming!

As we've noted before, the "rules" are just guidelines. They need not force you to decide something in a way that is unsatisfying for everyone. Yet, discretion is required. The opposite extreme is equally bad. PCs shouldn't be able to simply walk up to a Ringwraith unscathed and pop him one in the nose. They'd be very, very dead!

If worse does come to worst, be sure the PCs don't die pointless deaths. Few things are more painful to the player. Thorin died heroically, leading his forces into the teeth of the enemy in the Battle of Five Armies. Let the PCs be noble — even in death. (In fantasy, of course, death need not be the end. When Gandalf fell in Moria, he returned as the White Rider, twice as powerful as before.)

One more caution: don't let the players become dependant on you to bail them out when they get stuck. Give them all the breaks you can, but expect them to use their wits. That's why they're heroes and heroines — they succeed in circumstances that would bury less resourceful folk, and they do it with style!

Birds call in the distance, and a ladybug lands on a nearby log. The pine needles under you make a comfortable, cushioned seat. If only you weren't captives of Nat and Gil, relaxing here would be a treat!

All of you whose PCs are conscious make a *Perception* $\Delta 4$ maneuver roll.

The knots securing Lily's bonds are quite loose. Very little work would set her free. She could then easily untie her friends. If the PCs obtain poor dice rolls, allow them to roll again at intervals until someone notices the state of the Hobbit's bonds.

If Lily is unconscious or dead, the ropes restraining one of the conscious PCs should be loose.

The knots securing the ropes around Lily's wrists are quite loose. Very little work on them will set her free.

When the PCs are all untied, they may spend some time healing any damage done to them in the fight with Nat and Gil. Healing herbs from Tatharina's pouch or her *Healing* spell should do the trick.

• Once they are free and healed of the worst of their wounds, go to stage 11.

II

Nat and Gil have been absent for a suspiciously long time. What could they be doing in the Troll-hole? Perhaps you'd best go and see!

Having been beaten in a fight, the PCs may be reluctant to court another encounter with their foes. However, no matter how long they hesitate, Nat and Gil do not emerge from the Troll-hole. Eventually, the PCs should work up the courage to enter it themselves.

• *Go to stage 12.*

12

You find Nat and Gil at the door to the back storage room of the Troll-hole. Sprawled on the flagstone floor, they seem deeply asleep. Between them lies a small knife with a white-petaled enamel flower adorning its haft. Clearly the two were quarreling over the weapon, but why are they now lost in slumber?

A few grumbling sounds issue from Nat, and you catch the words: mine, why, and let go. Then Gil stirs and utters a few disjointed phrases: Inledair give it Maisi, Blackhearted send Broc Bree, no worry, Bree-landers soft.

Really, you'd better tie these rascals up, and wake them to find out who this Inledair is, and why he'll be troubling Bree-land!

Roping the wrists and ankles of the bandits is an activity, and the PCs may accomplish it automatically. Encourage them to do so!

A steady three minutes of shaking each rogue by the shoulder will wake each from sleep.

• *Go to stage 7.*

TROLL-PLUNDER

As the PCs explore the Troll-hole, refer to the floorplan as needed and describe the chambers thoroughly.

When the PCs first enter:

Rough granite blocks, each the size of a wash-tub, are piled up to form retaining walls on either side of the entry to the Troll-hole. The door, slightly ajar, is bound with iron straps and hangs on heavy iron hinges.

Inside, a haze tinges the air — faintly blue like wood smoke. The lighting is dim, since the sunshine that forms a yellow rectangle on the floor adjacent to the threshold does not penetrate far.

The largest chamber:

Markings in the dust on the floor indicate quite clearly where the pallets (removed to the bridge) of the two Trolls once lay. Without the bedding, their nightstand looks rather forlorn against the chill stone wall.

A sturdy oak table occupies the back corner of the room, flanked by knot-ridden benches. Considerable charring mars one side of the table (Gil placed the fireworks on it).

The dainty knife over which Nat and Gil were quarreling lies near the door at the back of the room.

The store room:

Nails driven into chinks between the stones of the back wall of the store room hold clothing and armor — probably garnered from the victims of the Trolls' stew pot. An iron-bound chest sits in the front corner. Above it, an empty and rusted torch sconce protrudes from the wall. The sconce is placed to ensure that anyone bending over inspecting the contents of the chest will bruise his or her head upon straightening.

The back closet:

Jars of jellied mutton, casks of salted mutton, and long leathery strips of dried mutton fill the shelves lining the back closet. A mouse skeleton adorns the bottom-most shelf. The top one holds a small rosewood box, its sides carved to depict a trellis covered with flowers.

The front closet:

Sacks of flour, bags of onions, turnips, and potatoes, huge rounds of cheese, and several jugs of ale load the shelves of the front closet. A spare stew pot squats on the floor below a row of nails. A hunting horn, a long bow, and a blue leather belt dangle from these make-shift pegs.

Following a quick once-over of the hole, the PCs will probably want to investigate the contents of the chest in the store room. It is locked and trapped. Unfortunately, the key remained in Lawrie's pocket when the Troll turned to stone. One of the PCs good at *Subterfuge* will need to pick the lock. (He or she should check it for traps first, attempt to disarm the trap, and *then* pick the lock.)

Finding the trap is a *Subterfuge*Δ8 maneuver. Disarming it is a *Subterfuge*Δ9 maneuver. Picking the lock is a *Subterfuge*Δ7 maneuver.

The trap involves 8 concealed darts, spring-loaded to spray out if the lock is picked. Anyone in the room will be hit by at least one of the darts if the trap is sprung. Roll ID6 (one six-sided die) twice to determine who is hit by the extra two darts. (1—Tolman, 2—Lily, 3—Gallind, 4—Tatharína, 5—Gláin, 6—Rilwen) Use the Combat Table to determine how much damage they deliver. (The darts' *Melee OB* is +3.)

A PC who picks the lock without disarming the trap, or who attempts to disarm the trap but fails, will suffer an attack from the darts.

Once it is open, describe the contents of the chest.

An odor created by the mingling scents of oiled steel, resinous wood, and dyed leather rises from the open chest when you push back its lid. Within, a gleam of gold and silver sparkles through the piled valuables.

Topmost of the heap is a roll of parchment secured by a blue silk ribbon. A quartered circle of iron with a chain of fine steel links that enable it to be worn as a pendant, a wooden mask painted with garish reds, blues, greens, and yellows, a blue velvet pouch, a small brass box, two leather pouches dyed blue and brown respectively, and a slim black leather case are heaped beneath the scroll. On the bottom of the chest lies a scabbarded sword and a Dwarven battle-axe. A thin skimming of coins surrounds the weapons.

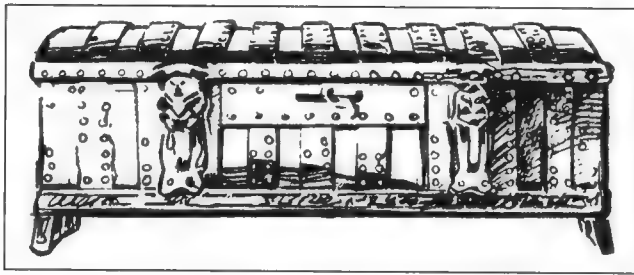
After the PCs have explored the Troll-hole and opened the chest, they may want a detailed listing of all the treasure in the hole. Read the list below aloud, or allow the players to make a copy of it.

The back closet contains:

- 3 dozen 1-quart jars jellied mutton
- 5 1-gallon casks salted mutton
- 20 strips dried mutton
- rosewood box containing 2 golden leaves¹ known as Golden Queensfan in the Westron

The store room contains:

- cloak of fine green wool, sized to fit someone of height 5'6" to 6'0'
- cloak of blue wool, trimmed with sable, and sized to fit someone of height 5'4" to 5'8'
- 3 pairs leather riding boots
- 1 pair lady's slippers of white suede ornamented with blue embroidery
- dressing gown of bronze silk
- breeches of grey corduroy
- a suit of leather armor sized to fit a Dwarf
- linen shirt with neck and wrist ruffles
- black felt hat with pheasant feather
- cape of sapphire silk
- chain mail shirt sized to fit a slender man
- chest of treasure



The chest contains:

- roll of parchment² secured by a blue silk ribbon; once opened, the following verse may be read:

Wounded be the fleshless!

Curséd be the deathless!

Arrow of air to pierce the ghost,

Spear of night to do its utmost

Shrivel the specter, the barrow to bless!

- quartered circle³ of iron with a chain of fine steel links to enable it to be worn as a pendant
- a wooden mask⁴ painted with garish reds, blues, greens, and yellows
- a blue velvet pouch filled with a fine blue powder⁵
- a small brass box containing a grey dust⁶
- blue leather pouch of 17 slingstones⁷
- brown leather pouch of 16 slingstones⁷
- a slim black leather case containing a set of lockpicks⁸
- sword⁹ with Elvish runes on the blade that spell out *Gurcrist*, which is Death-cleaver in the Westron; the hilt is wrapped in cord of textured black silk and bears a fire opal the size of a walnut; the scabbard is stiffened black leather and is ornamented with silver tracery (the lack of tarnish on the tracery will indicate to the knowledgeable that it is *mithril*, not silver)
- Dwarven battle-axe¹⁰ with a haft of black *dir* wood carved with stylized angry faces
- 97 gold coins, all bearing the ancient imprint of the Arnorian mint: seven stars
- 19 silver coins, also of Arnorian mint, bearing three towers
- 23 silver coins with the imprint of the Gondorian mint: a tree
- 81 copper coins, also of Gondorian mint, showing a ship

The main chamber contains:

- small knife¹¹, the size of a letter opener, with very sharp blade, and a onyx hilt adorned with a white enamel flower

The front closet contains:

- 4 sacks flour
- 3 bags onions
- 2 bags turnips
- 4 bags potatoes
- 6 rounds of cheese
- 7 jugs ale
- spare stew pot
- hunting horn¹² bound with white leather bearing bronze studs
- long bow¹³
- blue leather belt¹⁴

It would be impossible for the PCs to carry all of this back to town without a wheel barrow or perhaps a small cart. However, they would do well to choose which items they wish to keep for themselves (and claim now) before seeking transport for the rest.

Encourage the players to divide the treasure evenly and with some thought for which item might be of most use to which character. For example, Gláin should probably have the Dwarven battle-axe, while Tatharína could make skillful use of the Golden Queensfan. This initial division of the treasure should probably be revised later, in town, when the PCs have had a chance to learn about the treasure using *Item Analysis* spells.

Suggest that some of the coinage and foodstuffs be used to reimburse those Bree-landers who lost sheep to the Troll's appetites.

Nat and Gil should be brought to the lockhouse in Bree and given into the custody of the Shirriff. Two such ruffians certainly cannot be allowed to go free. Although their legs must be untied to allow them to walk, they should probably be hobbled (a length of rope, perhaps 14 inches in length, with its ends tied around each ankle) to prevent them from trying to run away.

When the PCs are ready to return to town, turn to page 60 for the next *sequence*: "ALL'S WELL AS ENDS BETTER!"

GM NOTE

Without using many *Item Analysis* spells, the PCs will not know the capabilities of all of the items found in the Troll-hole. Many are ordinary goods with no special properties. Those with unusual qualities (indicated above by superscripted numbers¹) are described below.

When the PCs get back to town, encourage them to determine the exact properties of each item of the treasure.

1 Golden Queensfan: one leaf placed on the lips of a dead person will bring him or her back to life, fully healed of any injuries.

2 Scroll: reciting the verse on the scroll in the presence of a Ghost, Specter, or Wight allows the reader to cast the spell *Spiritspear* (6): This spell may be used against any Specter, Ghost, or Wight within 100'. Roll the dice and add triple your *Magical bonus*; the result is the amount of *Damage Taken* by the target.

The verse disappears from the scroll as it is read. It will reappear a day later, and can be read again at that time.

3 Pendant: once a day, the wearer may cast the spell *Spiritsafe* (4): All within a 10' radius of the caster suffer only half the *Endurance* drainage normally caused by Ghosts, Specters, and Wights.

4 Mask: permits wearer to see clearly for 1 hour each day entities and things inhabiting the world of shadows; this includes Ghosts, Specters, Wights, and the dreadful Ringwraiths, as well as anything invisible; such clear vision grants the wearer an additional +2 to his or her *Melee OB* and *Missile OB* when attacking such foes.

5 Blue Powder: when mixed with water, makes a pigment of a rare blue valued highly by painters.

6 Grey Dust: one grain of the dust placed in the earth beside a seed, bulb, or seedling will cause the plant to flourish under even adverse conditions, and to bring forth fruit, nuts, etc. of superb flavor, size, etc.

7 Sling stones: resembling blue marbles, the stones do function against normal foes, but display their superior qualities against Undead. Skeletons, Ghosts, Specters, Wights, and Wraiths receive double the result shown on the combat table as *Damage Taken* when hit by these stones.

8 Lockpicks: add +2 to the *Subterfuge bonus* while their wielder uses them to pick a lock.

9 Sword: when used against Undead, +2 to *Melee OB* and +2 to *Damage Taken* from a successful blow.

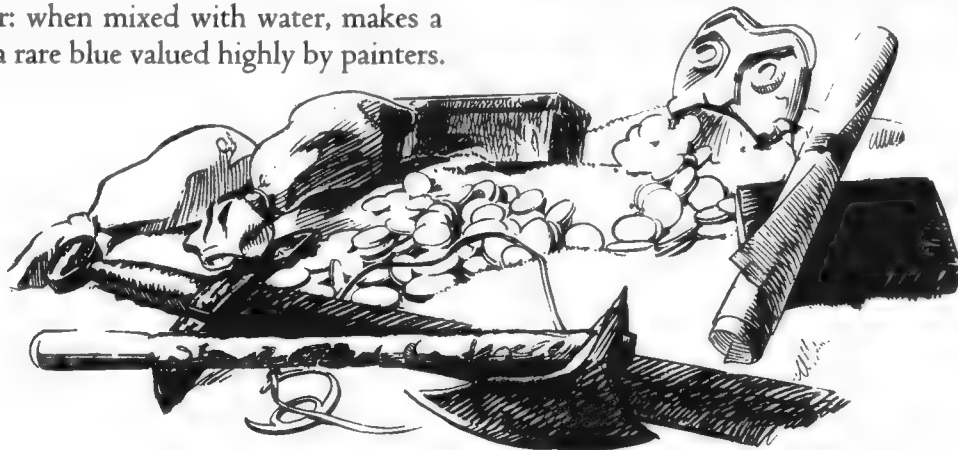
10 Battle-axe: when used against Undead, +2 to *Melee OB* and +3 to *Damage Taken* from a successful blow.

11 Knife: anyone who has killed a Hobbit, Human, Dwarf, Elf, or Half-elf, when touched by the knife, will fall into a sleep that lasts for 4 hours or until awakened by vigorous shaking, whichever comes first.

12 Hunting Horn: may be sounded 3 times per day; its call lifts the morale of any friends within hearing, giving them +1 to their *Melee OBs* and +1 to their *Missile OBs* for 5 rounds.

13 Long Bow: has a range of 200'; bestows +1 to *Missile OB* of wielder, and adds +1 to *Damage Taken* from a successful hit.

14 Belt: adds +3 to *Strength bonus* and +2 to *Melee OB* of the wearer for 6 rounds, 3 times a day.



“ALL’S WELL AS ENDS BETTER!”

As the PCs walk toward Bree, describe the rural countryside through which they pass.

After the chill stones of the Troll-hole and the cool shade of the Chetwood, the open pastures of Bree-land seem almost hot. The warmth of the summer afternoon has created a slight haze in the air, softening the outlines of the fields and meadows as they recede in the distance. Even the formidable hedge surrounding Bree wears a benign, diffuse aspect, like something in one of Lily’s watercolors.

The Greenway, flanked by fruit trees, runs south through the farms. Its flat paving stones are cracked, but free of the mosses, ferns, and weeds that thrive along most of its little-traveled miles. The traffic between Bree, Staddle, Archet, Combe and the outlying homesteads keeps this stretch of road bare of encroaching vegetation.

If any of the PCs ran for help during the fight with Nat Groathusk and Gil Mossgrave, they succeeded in reaching the Shirriff. He has roused a goodly portion of the citizenry of Bree, and a horde of Hobbits and Humans are pouring through the West-gate to come to the rescue just as the PCs arrive.

If no PCs went to get help, Holfast discovered his nephew’s absence from the lockhouse in the morning and formed a pretty accurate guess concerning the events of the night. (If Holfast caught the PCs in the act of releasing Tolman, he naturally knows exactly what their intentions were: confronting the Trolls.) The Shirriff became uneasy at Tolman’s & Company’s long absence from town. Where were they? Were they hurt? Eventually, he gathered a crowd of Bree-landers to go to the rescue, believing his nephew must be in dire trouble.

Describe the welcoming party present at the West-gate.

As the West-gate of Bree draws near, you see a crowd of Bree-landers, both Big Folk and Little Folk, gathered there. Odo Underbarrow in his patched trousers stands with his wife Cicely and their two pretty, chestnut-curled daughters. Polo

and Nandina Hammidge with their four apple-cheeked sons are there. The Broadtunnels, the Underbluffs, the Clayhills, the Oatstones, the Reedpipes, the Yarrows, and the Eppleworths are present too. And they’re all cheering, and jumping, and laughing, and waving their handkerchiefs. Even gloomy Boffo Hollohall has a smile on his face.

At the head of the crowd, beaming with pride, stands Holfast Bunce. “Hip, hip, hurrah!” he yells. “For the Troll-slayers, the shepherds’ champions, the defenders of Bree! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

Then the crowd surges forward, shouting your names, “Gláin the Warrior! Tatharína the Wise! Lily the Gentle! Hurrah! Tolman the Clever! Rilwen the Brave! Gallind the Far-sighted! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

They swirl around you, sweeping you through the West-gate. Wesley Privet, the junior Shirriff, takes charge of Nat and Gil, as Erling Underbluff and Hending Broadtunnel hoist Tolman onto their shoulders. Cheering the whole way to the inn, the Bree-landers pause at the door of *The Prancing Pony*.

“Master Butterbur! The heroes are here! Bring out your best ale, your choicest mushrooms, your most savory stew!” calls Polo Hammidge. “A feast for these brave lads and lasses! Ho, Master Butterbur!”

As you pass into the taproom, Barliman bustles through with a fistful of mugs in one hand and a tray of sliced cheese in the other. “What’s that they’ve done? Half a minute, Master Hammidge, if you please.” The hurried innkeeper disappears into the kitchen, then reappears mere moments later, retying the strings of his apron.

“Killed some Trolls, mercy me! They deserve more than a fine dinner for that, but you can be sure that *The Pony* will supply the best! Come this way, come this way,” insists Butterbur as he ushers you into a spacious back parlor.

Six round tables spread with white linen and each set for twelve people give ample promise of the feast to come. The Bunces, Polo Hammidge, and Odo Underbarrow sit down with you, eager to hear the tale of your adventures.

Encourage the players to narrate their exploits. Role play the responses of Odo, Polo, Holfast, Myrtle, Milo, and Wesley Privet (who joins the celebration after putting Nat Groathusk and Gil Mossgrave into the cells of the lockhouse).

Barliman Butterbur and Nob the Hobbit serve the feast and intersperse comments and exclamations where suitable.

As the banquet progresses, and bellies grow full, the Bree-landers start calling for a speech. Ideally, one of the PCs will rise and very briefly tell of the encounter with the Trolls, the wonderful victory, and the dreadful information obtained from Nat and Gil about the Bandit-king Inledair. Much cheering interrupts whoever performs this task.

This is the perfect moment to make a gift of gold coins (from the Troll-hole) to Odo Underbarrow and to Polo Hammidge to recompense them for

their lost sheep. Both make graceful thank-you's, expressing gratitude for the PCs' brave action against the Trolls.

It is also a good moment to announce the PCs intentions to find and defeat Inledair the Blackhearted. Many of the Bree-landers will offer food and camping supplies to the heroes!

Before the banquet can drag on or grow tedious, Barliman chases the excited Bree-landers out to the taproom, where they can discuss the news over mugs of his excellent beer.

He offers the PCs a free night at *The Pony* with breakfast in the morning as part of the reward. After showing them to rooms above stairs, he leaves them to their privacy. The PCs should take advantage of the peace and quiet to determine the exact properties of the treasure from the Troll-hole and to finally decide what will belong to whom.

GM NOTE

In this crowd scene, you may need to know the names of more Bree-landers. The list below is divided into Big Folk (Humans) and Little Folk (Hobbits).

Little Folk

Holfast Bunce, senior Shirriff, uncle to Tolman & Lily
 Myrtle Bunce, Holfast's wife
 Milo Bunce, a mischievous mite of 6 years
 Boffo Hollohall, a depressed Hobbit
 Gorum Flinthill, a miserly Hobbit
 Odo Underbarrow, poor farmer, lost sheep to the Trolls
 Cicely Underbarrow, a motherly Hobbit, Odo's wife
 Dulse Underbarrow, a pretty Hobbit-lass of 21 years, at the beginning of the irresponsible tweens
 Holly Underbarrow, a merry Hobbit-maid of 15 years
 Polo Hammidge, rich farmer who lost sheep to the Trolls
 Nandina Hammidge, Polo's wife, very elegant
 Halson Hammidge, Polo's eldest son
 Filibert Hammidge, one of Polo's middle sons
 Moro Hammidge, one of Polo's middle sons
 Wilcome Hammidge, Polo's youngest son
 Oleander Hammidge, Polo's very marriageable daughter
 Hending Broadtunnel, one of Tolman's friends
 Tansy Broadtunnel, Hending's daughter
 Erling Underbluff, one of Tolman's friends
 Clematis Underbluff, Erling's wife
 Andman Poggin, an old Hobbit, a neighbor to the Greenthumbs
 Amaryllis Banks, choleric Hobbit-widow
 Mongo Clayhill, dashing young bachelor

Osmunda Clayhill, Mongo's mother
 Hammy Hassock, does odd jobs around town

Big Folk

Wesley Privet, junior Shirriff
 Milt Hoary, crotchety widower
 Chas Bitterwilt, detests his wife
 Linda Bitterwilt, Chas' wife, poor cook
 Harry Oatstone, farmer, Tolman's friend
 Brigida Oatstone, Harry's wife, weaver
 Henry Reedpipe, runs general store, Tolman's friend
 May Reedpipe, Henry's wife, slow, calm, and staid
 Adelaide Yarrow, takes extraordinary pride in her lineage
 Michael Yarrow, scholar, Adelaide's brother
 Tobias Eppelworth, runs a grocery
 Pearl Eppelworth, Tobias' wife, bustling woman
 Hal Peppergrass, farmer
 Mary Peppergrass, Hal's wife, happy mother of 10
 Rose Dewberry, proud old lady
 Robin Dewberry, Rose's grandson
 Abbot Purslane, nosy fellow
 Rowan Purslane, nervous young mother
 Bartholomew, the Purslane's infant son
 Stefan Broomcorn, miller
 Kate Broomcorn, Stefan's wife
 Hepatica Spurge, crone
 Peter Bluert, a tired man
 Eliza Bluert, Peter's wife, rigid housekeeper
 Meg Bluert, stuck-up daughter
 Jon Stonewort, interested in military history
 Janet Stonewort, Jon's wife, hospitable hostess

EXAMPLE

Sometimes gear and other equipment gained from a treasure hoard requires the use of *Item Analysis* spells to make clear its magical properties. However, certain items may respond to a testing procedure that does not require the use of valuable spell points! In the paragraphs below, the PCs are testing some of the treasure from the Troll-hole.

Gláin's player: Would any of the boots fit a Dwarf?

GM: Well, they weren't made for Dwarves, but the smallest pair were designed for a lady with very wide feet. They might fit you, and they're plain black leather with no feminine embellishments.

Gláin's player: I try them on.

GM (rolling dice): Amazing! They fit almost like they were made for you!

Gláin's player: Maybe they'll let me walk on water. I try walking on the puddle outside.

GM: You slosh through as usual. The boots are very well made, so your feet don't get wet!

Gláin's player: Hmmm. Maybe they'll let me balance better. I hop up on the stone wall edging the garden and try walking along the top.

GM: What's your *Agility* stat?

Gláin's player: Minus one.

GM: After two steps, you pitch face first into the petunia bed! Gláin, you do know that these are riding boots, don't you?

Gláin's player: Riding! On the backs of horses, ponies, and donkeys?! No! Off they come! Immediately! (He yanks the boots off his feet.)

Tolman's player: I buckle the blue leather belt around my waist.

GM: You have to use the last punched hole, and even then it's a bit loose. However, it won't fall off.

Tolman's player: Maybe I'll be able to fly. I climb onto the wall that the Dwarf just fell off of and then jump.

GM: You land with a thump.

Tolman's player: Drat! I kick the wall in disgust.

GM: The wall looks to be quite sturdy, but your kick loosens the stone where your foot fell.

Tolman's player: Maybe I can walk on water with this belt. I try Gláin's puddle.

GM: Since you don't have boots on, your feet get wet. Very wet!

Tolman's player: Double drat! I stomp right in the middle of the puddle.

GM: The water travels a lot higher and farther than it ever has before, and utterly drenches Lily, who is standing nearby.

Lily's player: Tolman! How could you? I'll never get the mud out!

Tolman's player: Sorry. But you'd be disappointed too, if you were hoping to be able to fly!

Lily's player (forgetting her soaking wet frock): Wait a minute, wait a minute! Think! You've loosened a rock in a wall that has stood solidly for the five years since it was built. You splashed water farther than ever before. Tolman, try bending one of the bars on that wrought-iron railing.

Tolman's player: Good idea. I grab the lowest bar and pull.

GM: The bar starts to bend and then comes away in your hand! You've pulled it off the railing altogether!

Lily's player: Tolman, it's a belt of strength!



GM NOTE

Quarrels and hurt feelings should have no part in a role playing game! To ensure sunny tempers and good humor, exercise some care concerning the division of treasure. Fairness should be the guiding principle.

As a bare minimum, have the players do a round robin pick. That way no one player will benefit at the expense of all the rest. The PCs can always make trades between themselves later, if someone discovers that a particular item is of little use to him or her.

Ideally, the PCs will ascertain the capabilities of each item and assign it to the character who will use it most often and with the greatest benefit to the group. However, not all players will wish to be so altruistic. And that's okay, so long as a degree of fairness is maintained.

There are many acceptable methods of treasure division. The group may wish to give each PC one item that seems particularly suited to that character, and then do a round robin on the rest. Or some other variation may appeal to them.

So long as some degree of logic guides the division, you'll avoid protracted arguments, allowing everyone to enjoy the goodies.

You, the GM, should award *experience points* now for the brave deeds, clever ideas, and skillful *maneuvers* performed by the PCs during their adventure. Add up the figures you've recorded (on the chart on page 22 in *The Guidelines* or on a copy of the chart) and write the sums on six scraps of paper. Fold these notes and hand each one to the appropriate player. A few words praising the PCs' valor will also go over well!

Any players with PCs receiving 150 or more EPs may wish to convert the experience into bonuses at this time. They should use the methods outlined in *The Guidelines* on pages 21-22. If the hour is late, however — after a long and enjoyable evening of role playing — assigning bonuses (and savoring your characters increased capabilities) is often done at the beginning of the next FRP session.

The adventure "DAWN COMES EARLY" is now drawing to a close. You can discover what new perils challenge Tolman, Lily, Tatharina, Gláin, Gallind, and Rilwen — when they go to defeat Inledair the Blackhearted — by playing "DARKER THAN THE DARKNESS." This chilling sequel for the *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game* is available in fine game- and bookstores everywhere.

The End

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J.R.R. TOLKIEN SOCIETIES

Societies formed by people interested in Tolkien's works have sprung up all over the world. If you're looking for a chance to talk about *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* with folks who liked the tales as much

as you did, try contacting one of the groups below. Many of them print newsletters or bulletins for their membership. (The addresses are as current as possible, but some groups change addresses often.)

American Hobbit Association

Renee (Arwen) Alper
730 F. Northland Road
Forest Park, OH 45240, USA

American Mensa Tolkien Sig

publication: *Beyond Bree*
Nancy Martsch
P.O. Box 55372
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413, USA

American Tolkien Society

publication: *Minas Tirith Evening-Star*
Philip W. Helms
Box 373
Highland, MI 48031, USA

Elvish Linguistic Fellowship (ELF)

publication: *Vinyar Tengwar*
Carl Hostetter
2509 Ambling Circle
Crofton, MD 21114, USA

The Mythopoeic Society

publications: *Mythprint* and *Mythlore*
P.O. Box 6707
Altadena, CA 91003, USA

Tolkien Society

publication: *The Mallorn*
Membership Secretary
Mr. Chris Oakey
Flat 5, 357 High Street
Cheltenham
Glos. GL50 3HT
United Kingdom

Swiss Tolkien Society (Eredain)

publication: *Aglared*
Peter Buchs
Hubaeckerweg 1
5610 Wohlen
Switzerland

Cercle d'Etudes de Tolkien en Belgique

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Nathalie Kotowski
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Belgium

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